

# RELIGION IN LIFE

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A CHRISTIAN QUARTERLY

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# RELIGION IN LIFE

A CHRISTIAN QUARTERLY

Vol. XVIII Winter Number, 1948-1949 No. 1

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Printed in the United States of America

Published by  
ABINGDON-COKESBURY PRESS

150 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK

## Martin Luther on the Shepherds

**THIS IS A GREAT MIRACLE** that the shepherds should have believed this message. . . . They were so strong in the faith that they were worthy to be spoken to by angels and to hear every angel in heaven singing a cantata just for them. This is a pure wonder that enters not into the heart of man. Our God begins with angels and ends with shepherds. Why does he do such preposterous things? He puts a Babe in a crib. Our common sense revolts and says, "Could not God have saved the world some other way?" I would not have sent an angel. I would simply have called in the devil and said, "Let my people go." The Christian faith is foolishness. It says that God can do anything and yet makes him so weak that either his Son had no power and wisdom or else the whole story is made up. Surely the God who in the beginning said: "Let there be light," "Let there be a firmament," "Let the dry land appear," could have said to the devil, "Give me back my people, my Christians." God does not even send an angel to take the devil by the nose. He sends, as it were, an earthworm lying in weakness, helpless without his mother, and he suffers him to be nailed to a cross. The devil says, "I will judge him." So spoke Caiaphas and Pilate, "He is nothing but a carpenter," and then in his weakness and infirmity he crunches the devil's back and alters the whole world. He suffered himself to be trodden under the foot of man and to be crucified, and through weakness he takes the power and the Kingdom. . . .

"And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them." This is wrong. We should correct this passage to read, "They went and shaved their heads, fasted, told their rosaries, and put on cowls." Instead we read, "The shepherds returned." Where to? To their sheep. Oh, that can't be right! Did they not leave everything and follow Christ? Must not one forsake father and mother, wife and child, to be saved? But the Scripture says plainly that they returned and did exactly the same work as before. They did not despise their service, but took it up again where they left off with all fidelity, and I tell you that no bishop on earth ever had so fine a crook as those shepherds.

—From *The Martin Luther Christmas Book*, translated and arranged by Roland H. Bainton. The Westminster Press, 1948, pp. 47-48, 50.

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RELIGION IN LIFE is published quarterly by Abingdon-Cokesbury Press at 75 cents per copy. Subscription price, \$2.00 per year, \$5.00 for three years in the United States and possessions and Mexico; Canada, postage 18 cents per year additional; other foreign postage, 30 cents per year additional. For the convenience of readers in Great Britain, subscriptions will be received by the Epworth Press, 25-35 City Road, London, E. C. 1, at the rate of nine shillings and sixpence per year.

Publication office, 810 Broadway, Nashville 2, Tennessee. Editorial office, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, New York. Entered as Second Class Matter, August 26, 1942, at the post office in Nashville, Tennessee, under Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized March 16, 1923.

# "I Believe in God"

FREDERICK C. GRANT

## I

IT IS A WIDESPREAD and fairly common view, today, that the Christian creed is an involved metaphysical formula, wholly out of touch with the modern view of the world, and too antiquated to serve as the expression of a living, present-day faith. True, it uses ancient language, and presupposes an ancient world view. But the purpose of the creed is not to affirm a world view. When I say, "I believe in God," I am not setting forth an opinion, or subscribing to a hypothesis; instead, I am making an affirmation of self-committal. "I believe in God . . . who . . . ." (then follows a brief statement of what he is, and has done, and will do). This is no mere philosophical judgment of probability that he exists. Instead, it is the statement of a conviction which carries with it self-committal, trust, confidence, a whole reorientation of life, and not only my own but all men's. For if I believe in God, then I not only must entrust my own life to him but I must believe that every other man's life is oriented this way. The whole world, all human history, indeed the meaning and destiny of the entire cosmos is oriented toward God and his purposes and amenable to his will.

This is the fundamental conviction of the religious man and woman. There are other convictions, it is true, and other qualities of the religious mind—tenderness, and reverence, and so on. This has led some persons to distinguish between "religiousness" and "religion," between "piety" and "faith"—in the hope, apparently, of keeping the religious attitude toward life, even if positive "faith" and its expression in active "religion" may have to be abandoned. (That is the view, as I understand it, of many "humanists" as they prefer to be called.)

But for a majority of the human race, belief in God is the criterion, and marks off the religious man from the nonreligious. And it would

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be a real help to some of our contemporaries, I believe, if they could realize this: that the problem of saying the creed (it is a problem, to them) is really only the problem of saying the first sentence: "I believe in God." For all the rest is a series of explanatory clauses: God, *who is* the Creator, the Redeemer, the Sanctifier, who was revealed (a) in the creation and continuance of the world, (b) in the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus Christ, (c) in the sanctifying Spirit, who is active in the beloved community, manifest in the actual "forgiveness of sins" and the new life in Christ, the beginning here and now of the "life everlasting." This God is related to the whole cosmos, which depends upon him; to all of history, which culminates in the Incarnation and Redemption; to all motions of the inner life of man. Thus he is revealed in nature and in history and in human life,<sup>1</sup> above all in Christ. He is both transcendent and immanent, and at the same time historical and also above and beyond history.

It is *in God* that we affirm our belief, in the creed. And once we have affirmed this as a matter of conviction, the rest follows. Or, put the other way around, once we have recognized God, revealed in these various ways—or even in only one or two of them—we can take the initial step and say "I believe," and then go forward to learn the rest. It is not a system of theology that the creed sets forth, but only the simplest and most elementary (and yet the most fundamental) affirmation of the first principle of Christian faith: "I believe in God"—who created, redeemed, and sanctified: who still creates, redeems, and sanctifies, i.e., who makes holy and good, and leads men closer to himself, as they grow more and more into his likeness.

The opening words of the creed are like the opening words of Genesis, which in a way sum up the whole Bible: "In the beginning, God." For if he was in the beginning, then he alone was in the beginning, and he alone will be in the end: "the First and the Last, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord." And if he alone was in the beginning, and if he alone will be in the end, then everything that exists, all that transpires, is amenable to his will. All that is permanent must be derived from him; all that truly exists must depend upon him. All beings, all persons who truly exist must derive their existence from him.

<sup>1</sup> See the recently published posthumous book by the late Professor H. W. Robinson, *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament* (Oxford University Press, 1946)—one of the best books ever written in the field of biblical theology.

Whatever is opposed to him can be only passing and transient, like the shadow of a moving figure—the man moves on and the shadow disappears. And if God alone was in the beginning, so that no other power exists outside of or apart from God, and if he alone will be in the end, when "God is all in all" (or "is everything to all his creation"), then all that takes place must in some degree manifest him, and be a revelation or a reflection of him, from the tiniest particle of star dust to the Incarnation of his Son. The laws of creation are his laws. The rules of right and wrong are his rules. The love and wisdom and self-sacrifice of the noblest are reflections or expressions of his love and wisdom and self-sacrifice. All creatures, as Dante said, are moved by his love. Thus the words, "In the beginning God," contain all scripture *in nuce*, implicitly and in principle.

And so it is with the creed. "I believe in God" is the first and fundamental affirmation, and all the rest is expansion and elaboration of this. "I believe in God" *who is* (first) "the Father Almighty"—i.e., the all-ruling, *Pantokrâtôr*, rather than "Almighty" in the popular sense—"Maker of heaven and earth." And I believe (secondly) in God the Son: i.e., "in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord," who was conceived, born, suffered, died, was buried, rose again—who lived a truly and completely human life. *As man*, as the Son of God who became man, he has won the victory over death, and will in the end be the judge of the living and the dead. The ancient Docetists were wrong:<sup>2</sup> Christ was no phantom, no half-God, no disguised deity, no God walking the earth incognito, but a real man—and it was the purpose of the creed to rule out and contradict that error. And I believe (thirdly) "in the Holy Spirit," who inspires the sacred community of the people of God, "the Holy Catholic Church," which is "the communion of saints," the fellowship or society, the *Koinônia* of the redeemed. And because I believe in God, thus manifested, i.e., self-manifested, the living God, active and creative in the world and yet outside and above it, and therefore able to save, I also believe in the "forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting." But the first and crucial step is believing in God. The rest is all consequence and amplification: for the God in whom I believe *is* the God who "doeth all these things."

<sup>2</sup> So are the modern Marcionites who refer to God as "Christlike." The term does not fit the religion of the Bible—God is not *like* Christ, but reveals himself in Christ. Biblical religion is thoroughly theocentric.

## II

But the problem lies right here, someone will say. How *can* we believe in such a God, in a world like this? The chief obstacles in the way of belief in God, in our generation, are probably three: (1) the world view of modern science; (2) the purely commercial and competitive type of social life in which our generation is immersed—sometimes called (for lack of a better word) “modern capitalism”; and (3) the disunity, futility, irrelevance, and apparent chaos within organized religion itself.

1. *Science*. It is true, the world outlook of modern science staggers the imagination. We live on an aging planet which circles annually about a dying sun, in one of the less pretentious sections of the stellar universe. Eventually our little planetary system will fade out and disappear as mere dust and ashes floating in the vast cosmic abyss. How different from the majestic prophecy of the Creation story with which the Bible opens, or the New Jerusalem pictured at its end!

But science does not tell the whole story. It has nothing to say about the why and wherefore of creation. It may very well be that instead of dust and ashes and a stream of burned-out particles of matter floating in space, there will survive what only philosophy and religion and inspired poetry can suggest to us: a realm of spiritual persons, the children of God, born into this world of time and space but redeemed out of it, after their term of schooling or discipline has ended, and destined to exist forever in some higher form of being, the bearers of values which God himself delights in, the reflection of what exists eternally in him.

Indeed, as one of our own philosophers has asked, who can tell if the whole universe itself will not, in the end, gradually shift to some higher key, and its creative energies be manifested in something less evanescent and transitory than this present system of matter, energy, or motion? <sup>3</sup> It is, in truth, the imagination that is staggered by modern science, not the reason or the will or the human heart. And if one has ever known God at firsthand, he can “never doubt him or deny,” whatever difficulties the imagination may face in picturing our relation to the universe, or the relation of the universe to God. In fact, only *more* imagination is required, to see the cosmic drama in broader perspective—but still subservient to the love and wisdom of the eternal God.

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<sup>3</sup> See the Lowell Lectures of the late Professor A. N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (Macmillan, 1926), *ad fin*.

2. *The Social Struggle.* But it is probably the actual situation in which men find themselves from day to day that makes faith so difficult for most of us. If God is just and good, how can life be made so hard for countless millions of people? Nature may be "red in tooth and claw," and yet not bother many people; but *human* nature seems to be like that too. The powerful, the ruthless, the purely acquisitive have their way with us—and potatoes rot in heaps in the same world with starving children. Proud, determined men fight on desperately for some political or economic theory or other, and destroy everyone who gets in their way. Vast stocks of surplus goods are accumulated by overproduction, and then are destroyed in order to maintain some artificial price level, instead of being distributed to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, or house the homeless.

Men call this "capitalism," and then either defend it as such or assail it. Whereas both defenders and attackers are blind to the real situation, and are tricked by a word. Call it what it really is—commercialism, selfishness, greed, hoggishness, a crime against our fellow men (a crime, like murder), and a sin, a ghastly and abhorrent sin in the sight of God. How can we escape the judgment of God if we practice such things, or tolerate them in the name of some economic theory or other? We may fool ourselves, we rich, easy-going Americans; but we will not fool the rest of the world—which is cold and hungry. And we cannot hope to escape the judgment of God, whatever our theories—and I say this solemnly, and as one who still believes in capitalism, i.e., as an economic theory not as a cloak for greed.

It is almost hopeless to try to convince people, one at a time, that communism is wrong, when some flamboyant act of injustice or of social waste or of pure, unadulterated selfishness and greed convinces a thousand more persons that capitalism is responsible for such deeds. The worst possible enemies of the free enterprise system are those men who are using it, not as a means of production, distribution, and welfare for the whole nation and the whole world, but in order to amass unearned fortunes for themselves—battening like vultures on the world's misery, and getting rich in the midst of war and famine.

There is no defense for such crime, and it is merely stupid to say that this sort of thing "is of course incidental to capitalism—whose great merits nevertheless outweigh its serious defects." The *religious* condemnation of greed and selfishness has not been sufficiently stressed

among us. It is time something should be said. If the greedy cannot be excommunicated from the church, or exiled from the commonwealth, at least let them be shamed and ostracized, and made to feel the burden of disgrace! But, alas, we reserve the thunders of our excommunications for the venial offenses, or for none at all, e.g., remarriage after divorce, or for disbelief in miracles. We pay no attention to actions which strangle the economic process in the interest of the few, and thus more effectually destroy free enterprise than all the spies ever sent out from Moscow. Cannot we see how this state of things makes it all but impossible for many persons to believe in God? But such a state will not last. All history stands against it, and the day will come when men can once more believe—when, in fact, men will behold God's judgment at work in his world, even as the prophets of old beheld it.

3. *Religious Disunity.* When we look at the forces of religion, and see how divided, scattered, unco-operative they are, is it any wonder if, in consequence of this situation, many persons find it impossible to believe in God? How can they, when the testimony is so contradictory, and the witnesses cancel out each other's statements?

But again the present situation is not final. We live in a period between the ages—the long past and, we trust, the long future. We are seeing before our very eyes the breakup of cherished systems of thought which no longer fit the facts. The crisis has been forming for generations, even for centuries—like the earthquake, which only resolves strains that have been accumulating for countless years. No wonder some of us cling to the old, the tried and true, while others demand a new formulation of faith! And so there is conflict and contradiction. But out of it will come, eventually, a synthesis. It was five centuries after the fall of Rome and the irruption of the northern barbarians before the medieval synthesis even began. It was over 150 years after the chaos of the later Roman Republic before the quiet age of the Antonines was ushered in. Some day, in our world, a balance, an equilibrium will be achieved—but not very soon, I fear.

### III

Meanwhile, in the midst of the turmoil of our times, in the midst of threatened chaos and destruction, and the vast disunity of the religious world, a person really *can* find God, and find strength and insight and a source of fresh light and courage. God has "not left him-

self without witness" anywhere in his world, or in any age. The door of faith, of prayer, the passage into a life lived in union with God, a life peaceful and calm amid the turmoil and distraction of this world—that is open to everyone.

Some of the most religious men and women, the deepest and devoutest and most saintly, have lived in barren or distracting times, when the whole world seemed out of joint. Look at our Lord and the Apostles—living in a nation threatened with extinction by the all-powerful arms of Rome; a nation weakened by internal disloyalties, its ecclesiastical system ruled by Sadducean quislings, its civil and religious order threatened by fanatics, the Zealots. It was a nation, in fact, on the verge of the abyss and about to plunge over—as it did thirty years later in the mad, hopeless, utterly suicidal revolt against Rome—and destined to repeat all this sixty years later still, in the even more tragic Second Revolt. Yet it was in times like those that the gospel originated, and spread, and brought life and immortality to light in dark corners, far beyond its place of origin.

Who can tell what might, what may, emerge in these dark days of ours? Who can tell if the gospel may even have a second outburst of expansion and propagation, comparable to the first—indeed, it has already had such a second outburst, in modern times. Perhaps this is the dark hour before the dawn; we are in the thick of the hard, fierce struggle that comes just before the victory. Perhaps so—we do not know, for we cannot foretell the future. But at least this is certain: each one of us can believe in God, and trust in him, and entrust ourselves to him, more sincerely than heretofore; and at the same time do all that we can to remove obstacles in other persons' paths; and then, "having done all, to stand," firm and unyielding in our religious faith.

If we really believe in God, now is the time to say so. Now is the time to stand and be counted. Now is the time to act as if we did believe, and as if this really were God's world, not the devil's, and no blind maze of blundering, meaningless matter accidentally formed into one of its strange, shifting patterns, where anyone can do as he likes, and where God is far away, or dead and forgotten. No! This is the world of the living God, our Father's world; and we are sojourning here for a brief time, on our way toward his heavenly city; and our whole understanding of the meaning of life depends upon recognizing this.

*I believe in God!* Let me awake from these weird dreams: I am

not living in some haunted house—some dreadful cobwebby tumble-down mansion whose masters died a hundred years ago. No, nor am I fighting for my life in some fierce battle in the jungle, where I can survive only if others go down—no, these are my brothers. No, nor must I depend for my knowledge of God upon what others say—though they can help. For the message does not come in code, or by relay of messengers, but directly, “it is in thine heart, and nigh thee, in the ear.” For this really *is* God’s world, and he is very near, and his purpose is sure to prevail. Those who thwart it do so at their cost. I can serve him now, and live close to him, and find strength and help for daily needs, and the assurance of victory and peace at the last. And when I take this view, and affirm this attitude, and make the *act* of faith, then life acquires harmony and meaning, and is lifted up to a higher plane, and takes on new dignity and worth. At last I know what I am, and what my life is for, and why this whole world of struggle and of discipline exists: at last I know, for I believe in God.

# The Church Situation in France

HOWARD SCHOMER

BY ALL OUTWARD and many inward signs France today avows itself a country that has run away from God. There are many other lands where most of the people, quite regardless of how they were baptized, what they profess, or how they will be buried, are faithful, practicing atheists: they act, in their deepest strivings and most crucial decisions, as if there were no God. There are also, of course, lands where most of the inhabitants still have hardly awakened to the reality of the living God. Then there are nations which, in the name of some new social, economic, or political goal, are waging a bitter war against God, while still other lands are now frantically employing God as an ultimate secret weapon, in the hope of warding off some form of social revolution or foreign invasion. But the case of France is unique: once the especially devoted "elder daughter of the Church," the first European land beyond the Alps to accept the Catholic Christian faith, it has become a country of fugitives from God.

## FLIGHT FROM GOD

At least thirty-two million of the French people—eighty per cent of the population—have no active membership in any religious group. But if there is this little hypocrisy today, there is likewise no militant atheism abroad in the land. The mass of the people make no pretense of religious belief, but neither do they disturb the peace of the minority of believers. The quarter of the voters who have regularly supported the communist party ever since the end of the war speak of liquidating "trusts" and of liberating the nation from the tentacles of "American imperialism," but the nearest they come to attacking God is in their reaffirmation of the danger of parochial schools and the necessity of expanding the sweep of the independent public education system. Noteworthy also is the fact that the only party to rival the communists in voting strength does not call itself, as in Germany, Italy, and nearly everywhere

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else, a "Christian Democratic" party, but simply the "M.R.P."—Popular Republican Movement, although it is in its core a liberal Catholic group. Church sociologists in France, Catholic and Protestant alike, often speak of their nation as "de-Christianized," but not as "anti-Christian" or "pagan," and certainly not, except in a few localities, "priest-ridden."

Anyone who has ever traveled in France knows that its countryside is much like a vast park in which are enshrined the most exalted monuments of a past civilization bearing the imprint of Christian lore. The saints are everywhere memorialized in ancient place names. Village churches, lonely abbeys, seminary cloisters, the awesome cathedrals, bear a silent testimony to the dominant faith of another day. But most of the people in our time walk among these monuments as do many Germans in their débris-piled cities: they walk around these imposing heaps as if they did not see them. The courtyard of Hitler's one-time Chancellery has become a few square yards of earth where grimy, barefooted people, passing before the ruins of the diplomatic reception hall, come to tend their vegetable patches, each carefully marked off from the unknown neighbor's by a little string fence. The square before Notre Dame de Paris, ennobled rather than ruined by the ages, is for most Parisians an area to be crossed when one is en route from one bank of the river to the other, perhaps in search of still another of those "papers" which the bureaucracy continually obliges you to obtain from some office in the near-by Prefecture of Police. What has the ruined Chancellery, what has the Cathedral of Notre Dame to do with the exigencies of contemporary existence?

Such impressions as these do not indicate that the religious consciousness of the French people has become only a fitting subject for antiquarian research into a dead past. The fact is rather that this nation which neither confesses nor denies nor exploits God, whose official attitude toward the things of religion is that of complete separation of church and state, of cold and distant formality—this French nation, at a deeper view, appears to be a fugitive from God, a troubled and unhappy runaway from every form of faith. In a book published last year, *Enquêtes sur les valeurs spirituelles à Paris*, the sober estimate is made that not more than ten per cent of the population believes or regularly practices any religion. But there are many signs that a far greater number of people are unable to forget the insistent reality of God, even if they want to.

There are four main reasons why so many French people would

like God not to exist. None of them are new in history, and the first two are as familiar in the English-speaking world as in France, and so need little amplification here. The village drunkard in Ontario, in Alabama, or in Ardèche is likely to endeavor to avoid confrontation with a Judge whose way is too high and too hard. Contrary to Anglo-Saxons' romantic ideas about Latin moderation with regard to alcoholic drink, the evidence is clear that a kind of perpetual inebriation characterizes the lives of thousands of French people, an alcoholic glow which takes the corners off some of the daily problems and also hides, for a while, the persistent problem of existence. The farmers of the area I know best are capable of drinking from four to eight quarts of wine a day all through the warm months, and one of them—by no means an extreme case—solemnly assures me that "water is bad—it rusts the lining of the stomach"! The average sale *per inhabitant* in the near-by industrial town of La Ricamarie was before the war the highest in France (with many runners-up for the honor): seventeen quarts of alcoholic beverages per day!

The second factor also is a familiar one. When Bergson spoke of "our aphrodisiac civilization," surely he contemplated the whole of our antiascetic Western world and not only France. But the arty sensuality of certain circles in Paris has become world-renowned, whereas the plain ugly rural debauchery which is found in every Western country is really much more characteristic of France. Still other thousands of those residents of their parishes whom priests and pastors mark down as "indifferent" are probably to be explained thus. As Catholicism has its confessional, Protestantism has its solemn corporate confession of sin, and many prefer to enjoy their pleasures uncondemned by the churches and undisturbed by the commandments of God. But pastors report that the often hidden excesses of such people as rarely lead them to repudiation of religion as to confession of sin. "*Tout doucement*" is their frequent response to pastoral exhortation: "*plus tard, plus tard.*" They will face up to the claims of God, indeed to his very existence, later, when life's animal energies are lower. There is a time for everything.

If these first two causes of this flight from God are by no means peculiar to the French, the last two, at least in degree, are especially relevant to the French situation. The love of money is the root of all evil, and the third factor in this explanation is certainly a terrible avarice. Without at all overlooking the fine hospitality which French people of all

classes lavish upon foreign visitors, or, even more important, without leaving unremarked the extraordinary generosity of profoundly Christian individuals happily encountered here and there, the most affectionate francophile has to recognize a certain gracelessness about most financial affairs in France, a hard-fisted gouging out of the last cent. While the special circumstances of our mission have usually protected us from this reign of extortion, many business men indeed showering little favors upon us because we represented a continuing gift of American Christians to a French community, we have sadly observed this avarice in the dealings of French people with each other. French captains of industry are commonly guilty of blind devotion to their profits, fighting every gain of the workers, and they rarely show themselves the "benevolent bourgeois" of legend, the selfless benefactors of service institutions, secular or ecclesiastical. Merchants and peasants, landlords and tenants rarely show any interest in arriving at a "just price," but work rather on the principle of charging all the traffic will bear. Naturally this leads to everybody acting on the same principle, for every seller knows he must get an exorbitant price in order to be able to pay an exorbitant price when, in his turn, he becomes buyer. Surely there are many millions of fugitives from God in France quite simply because they are not willing to let him be Lord of their financial affairs, to serve him as stewards of his money.

The last reason for France's effort to escape from God is of an intellectual order. To state it simply we may point to certain historical facts in their chronological order. Catholic theology and philosophy, which had reached their pinnacle of achievement in thirteenth-century France, had gone to seed by the sixteenth century in the midst of a church where administrative and financial dishonesty and oppression reigned. The purification of the church and the revitalizing of its intellectual life through the triumph of the Reformation seemed as sure in France in the first half of that century as anywhere in Europe, and by the time of the convocation of the first National Synod at least one third of the French nation had become Protestant. But by the mutual appeal to arms and the gradual annihilation of the Protestant armies, the Roman Catholic Church regained absolute control. In this artificial Catholic preponderance in the intellectual life of the seventeenth century, Descartes exercised his trenchant critical faculties, and the French mind suffered a mutation. The medieval mind gave way in France not to the Protestant mind, but to the completely rationalistic and analytical skepticism of Descartes.

France had one more chance in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to attain religion with freedom through a new reform movement *within* the Catholic Church—Jansenism, a theology and mysticism close to Calvinism but accepting the principle of the Papacy. Pascal was its most eloquent exponent. Again the political powers in the country, king and aristocracy, obtained the near-annihilation of this tendency. When the gathering tempest broke in the great Revolution, religion was fully identified with authoritarianism, and the virile forces of the nation therefore broke away from religion in the same thrust by which they overthrew the Bourbons and the Old Régime. A century and a half have passed since then, and still the bulk of the French nation feel they have to choose between religion and freedom. As in 1789, they do not hesitate. They choose freedom, and some try to make a religion of it. Few are those who ever learn of the existence of a free evangelical religion. Baldly put, many Frenchmen are unhappy fugitives from God because they believe God is inextricably and inexplicably tied up with the dictatorship of the Roman Catholic Church. How pathetically revealing is that remark of some completely secular-minded prefect or other minor official, so often encountered by French Protestants: "You are Protestant? I am, of course, myself a freethinker. But I assure you that I feel infinitely closer to you Protestants than to my Catholic friends. If I had faith, I should certainly be a Protestant!"

#### ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Sections of the Catholic Church are keenly aware of the tragic religious situation in France today. In his book which appeared at the outset of the war, *France: Field for Missions*, the Abbé Godin estimated that there are not more than 7,000,000 Catholics in good standing in all France. This is only ten times the number of Protestants who have some living relationship with their churches. But recently the Archbishop of Toulouse wrote that not more than 3,000,000 French people are faithful Catholics. Admittedly such figures are hard to determine with accuracy, and in any case their value is to suggest the quality rather than measure the size of the tragedy. More definite is the figure of 15,000 active priests as compared with 700 active ministers—and both figures clearly reveal that many one-time flourishing Christian parishes are without shepherds today.

In the face of the vast detachment from religion, the Roman Catholic Church is carrying on two sharply different campaigns. There are in-

transigent public meetings that defy the drift of the times, asserting that through Rome alone lies individual and national salvation; there are dramatic processions that traverse the country, consecrating it to the Virgin and calling upon her to lead the people back to God. But there is also a congeries of newer movements grouped under the name of "Catholic Action," which try to go to the people where they are, witnessing faith in Jesus Christ and giving simple instruction of liberal Catholic views on the Church, politics, and economics. Sometimes they "parachute" ardent laymen and priests without clerical garb into very hostile or apathetic milieus where there is no longer a parish base, to earn their livings alongside the people, to get to understand them, and gradually to develop among them a knowledge of the gospel and a desire to participate in the life of the Church.

These strategies, used in an effort to follow and perchance to win back many of the runaways from God, are but signs of the great vitality to be observed at the heart of the Roman Catholic Church in France. On the intellectual level there are also signs of this Catholic Renaissance. One generation, our own, has seen many educated men turn toward Catholic thought because of the brilliant work of three Frenchmen: Étienne Gilson, the greatest interpreter of medieval philosophy; Jacques Maritain, the brilliant propagandist of neo-Thomism; and Gabriel Marcel, the foremost philosopher of Christian existentialism. The Benedictines are planning an uncloistered center of Catholic studies near Paris, a kind of Catholic *Cité Universitaire*. One of the most interesting and independent reviews currently published in France is the Catholic-Socialist *Esprit*, edited by Emmanuel Meunier. Behind all of these signs is the renewed interest in an intelligible celebration of the Mass.

On Easter morning in 1948 I tried to worship in the milling throng that crowded the cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris for the solemn high mass, preceded by the awesome procession of cardinal, archbishops, bishops, and scores of younger priests. The antiphonal choirs and organs, the majestic ceremony, the unusual arrangement whereby a hymn-leader guided in the singing of the creed, and a cardinal saying mass faced the congregation from behind a simple table, the glorious ensemble of soaring Gothic arches, superb stained glass, the nave and aisles bursting with spectators, the very deep chancel complete with choirs, assisting and presiding clergy, the royal brilliance of many candles . . . it all overwhelmed the senses. Scattered among the curious tourists and the fash-

ionable Parisians present were children and intellectuals, young people following the Mass with new-looking prayerbooks in hand. It seemed as if French Catholicism might have a vaster influence than the eye could see on Good Friday when a bare three hundred persons attended service in the immense cathedral. Could it be that the Abbé Godin and the Archbishop of Toulouse greatly underestimated the effectiveness of their Church in contemporary France?

Perhaps. But a longer examination of the basic currents in the life of the Roman Catholic Church in France has shown me no grounds for believing that fugitives from God will be able to find in the Catholic Renaissance that religion in freedom which alone can win many of them back and hold them in communion with God.

In 1947 and early 1948 some French priests quietly initiated small fraternal meetings with Protestant ministers, and I have sometimes had the privilege of taking part in such all-day encounters. Occasionally a priest would frankly indicate that the Vatican itself had encouraged them to enter into such contacts. This development accords well with the current stress of the Church here in France on Bible study, the use of the French language concurrently with the Latin at baptisms and funerals, and the observance of the World Week of Prayer for the Reunion of the Churches. We at Chambon have had the rare experience of hearing a passionate plea for unity through the transcendent power of love, delivered by a priest in a Protestant young people's vespers service at last summer's construction camp. Several of us will long remember an evening in February when, upon the invitation of the lone Protestant pastor and certain Jesuits of the ancient prefecture town, LePuy, our professor of philosophy at Collège Cévenol, Monsieur Paul Ricoeur, and one of the Jesuit professors at their Seminary in LePuy discussed church unity before a packed theater in that town. It was probably the first time that most of the auditors had ever heard a Protestant speaker, and it was certainly one of the first times in French history that prominent Catholic and Protestant spokesmen fraternally and publicly treated such a delicate question.

Even if the grave peril of Stalinism did not threaten the liberty of all religious people on the continent today, a factor which honest priests and ministers try to rule out of their thinking on church unity, friendly contacts between French Catholics and Protestants seem destined to be multiplied for a time. All good Catholics are sorry for the uncharitable

conduct of their ancestors toward the Huguenots, and the Huguenots have some memories from the sixteenth century which are likewise discomfiting. But the affirmative force has been the dynamic appeal of the ecumenical movement, our World Council of Churches. While the Catholics cannot simply enter into it like other denominations, for its federal and parliamentary character clashes head-on with their absolute monarchy form of organization, its emphasis on unity, like the dogmatic theology of Barth and Brunner, encourages them to believe that many Protestants have surrendered the exaggerated individualism of other days and are ready, like Catholics, to think primarily in corporate and dogmatic terms. On the other hand, French Protestants have also been fired with the ardor of the ecumenical movement, and they rightly say that whereas we Anglo-Saxons automatically think of grouping Presbyterians and Episcopalians, or the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches, etc., when we talk of church union, in France the ecumenical movement must at once face the ultimate test. The Reformed Church and the Lutheran Church, already united in the Protestant Federation and using a common hymnbook, can think only of their Catholic neighbors when they abhor the scandalous division of Christendom or when they pray with Christ "that all might be one." France today may be the hardest testing ground for the ecumenical movement, as in the political sphere it already is for the drive for socialization with democratic liberty, and in the international field, for the desperate effort to build a European Federal Union.

Our unhappy impression is that all this flurry of interconfessional activity, sincere though it mostly is, holds no promise of a new day. In May, 1948, the Vatican suddenly thundered a cryptic condemnation of certain types of Catholic-Protestant ecumenical fraternization, and we are at present waiting to see what this will mean for such fellowship as we have tried to establish along the lines above described. But even without this abrupt blow it was evident that the Catholic attitude, however kindly put, now always addressed to "separated brothers" rather than to "heretics," seems to be resumed in the assurance of a fond welcome for the erring brothers when they are ready to come home to the Mother Church who sees little to criticize in their newly-orthodox ideas, who is glad they know the Bible so well, who will doubtless be ready to do away with certain practices that are repugnant alike to them and to the gospel. The Jesuit speaker in the theater at LePuy asserted passion-

ately that the Church *must* get rid of undoubtedly false relics. He said nothing about the true ones. This was rather sharply in contrast with the Protestant position, which seemed to be resumed in the hope that God in his wisdom might invade our poor broken churches with his Spirit, leading them above their old quarrels upon a rising tide of sanctity, creating that better, that *spiritually* unified church which, even before the Reformation, never really existed.

#### PROTESTANTISM

French Protestantism was dying at the beginning of this century because of a threefold malady. In so far as Protestantism was simply anticlericalism, there were now political parties which more effectively expressed that conviction than did the Protestant churches. In so far as Protestantism was belief in human progress, various secular philosophical schools stated this belief more clearly than did the churches. And thirdly, the churches which Huguenot ancestors had died for now cost practically nothing, being state-supported, and, costing little, they were loved much less.

During the first twenty years of this century these Huguenot churches have been disestablished, the first World War has destroyed the allure of the philosophies of progress, and now political parties have left men of good will in profound disillusionment. The Huguenot theologians and pastors have been leading their flocks back to their harsh Calvinistic theological heritage, and many of the Lutheran groups of the eastern provinces have likewise been, as the expression goes, similarly "Calvinized." At least fifteen times since the end of the war, plainly announced and colorless meetings in municipal arenas have been attended by crowds of from five to six thousand who have listened attentively as cultured, able, and not always dramatic preachers have thrown the glaring light of biblical (Calvinistic) realism upon the hopeless life of natural man. But if the auditors, from their own tragic experience, can readily document hard statements of man's depravity and utter need, perhaps beneath their ironic disillusionment they are often painfully ready to hear of any consolation in which any honest man believes. They listen attentively also to the speakers' proclamation that Christ is the Truth, the only true revolutionary, the one Savior of mankind. Yet the most massive obstacle to the evangelization of Protestantism, Catholicism, Marxism, or even existentialism, is not the competition each gives to the

rest. It is the fatigue which almost everyone feels after the long, losing battle against want and inflation and the chronic incapacity of the masses, too often enthusiastic and too often deceived in the past, to believe anybody or anything today.

The rebirth of Calvinistic biblical Christianity in the Protestant churches of France is so marked, especially among the younger ministers and most ardent lay leaders (even if it is by no means the only vital current flowing in their midst), that it needs to be explained a little more fully. The availability of Protestantism for the recovery of the fugitives from God is fundamentally conditioned by this new Calvinism, and a similar situation seems to hold in several other Continental lands. So great has been this conditioning and so sudden that sometimes French Protestants, meeting representative American Protestants in ecumenical gatherings, will tell them impulsively, "But you sound just as we did forty years ago!" To this the American Congregationalist or Presbyterian can only respond, "And you, you speak as we did three hundred years ago!" In both remarks there is considerable but not complete truth.

Between the establishment of the first Reformed parishes in France in 1527 and the convocation of the first National Synod thirty years later, which precipitated the outbreak of recurrent "wars of religion" that continued through forty tragic years, the Reformed Christian faith rallied perhaps one-third of the nation around three cardinal principles:

1. The church "reformed by the word of God" derives all its teaching from the Bible alone, whose authority is certified and its meaning interpreted exclusively by the interior witness of the Holy Spirit acting in the souls of men.

2. The primary truth revealed by the Bible is that we are saved by grace; that is justification by faith alone.

3. The reverse aspect of this same truth is that to God alone is all glory and total sovereignty; that is, predestination to eternal life or eternal damnation.

During the seventeenth century, Calvin's condensed treatment of the implications of these basic principles was worked over and worked out by Protestant scholastics, and in the eighteenth century the main body of Protestants was either destroyed, living in permanent exile, or hiding away in the mountain fastness of the Massif Central. Even so, this remnant, of whom many went to the galleys for their Protestantism, began to replace its biblical theology with the deism of the prevalent

philosophers. When by his concordat Napoleon made all churches respectable state churches after 1803, nervously exhausted French Protestantism seemed to settle back into a lifeless external orthodoxy, only moderately shaken by the wave of methodistic revivals imported from England. But in the later nineteenth century and on up to World War I, it was increasingly transformed by the liberalism emanating from Germany. On its periphery it was quickened by an evangelistic "social gospel" movement. With the organizational and financial crisis precipitated by the uninvited separation of church and state in 1905, doctrinal interests had to be left largely to individual theologians for the moment; but after the first World War the church began to rediscover its corporate reality and to seek, in this smoldering age, its reason for existence. The studies of great Calvinist scholars like Lecerf and Doumergue began to appear, and Barth was thundering dialectically on the right bank of the Rhine. The seeking church was led by this handful of men to look nowhere else for its reason and way of existence than in the Holy Scriptures.

The resulting outlook characteristic of the latest generation of ministers is a kind of temperate, moderate neo-Calvinism, rich in biblical knowledge, vitally concerned about liturgics (conceived exclusively in terms of verbal symbols), sometimes showing a little of the impatience of the newly emancipated with regard to humanitarian liberalism, tireless in preaching the free grace of Christ, but not often playing with the fire of predestination while in the pulpit. On guard against any recrudescence of a mere religion of works, their own good works nevertheless abound. Their consecration to their vocations is unquestionable and visible: there is only one minister for every fifteen hundred people of Protestant origin; each minister tries to live on the uniform base salary which today amounts to about \$40 a month plus the State's regular family allowances; few pastors ride anything less exhausting than a bicycle even in sprawling mountain parishes. Most pastors do not limit their goal to rebuilding their parishes on solid doctrinal foundations: obedience to the Spirit, team work, "communitary" Christianity, evangelization—these are big words in parish life, loaded with scriptural memories of the practices of the first Christian churches.

#### THE WORK AT CHAMBON

After having endeavored to indicate the spiritual topography of

present-day France in this rapid reconnoiter, I must quickly sketch, at the invitation of the editor, some of the special, sometimes distinctive features of the little corner where I live and work. Our mountain village is the first predominantly Protestant municipality that one encounters on climbing into the Cévennes Mountains from the north. We are forty miles and three and one-half hours by train from St. Étienne, the gateway city. Nine out of ten of the three thousand Chambonais are nominally Protestant; the tenth is nominally Catholic; and church interest is high, though I suppose that half of the population never goes into any church except at moments of family crisis. Chambon-sur-Lignon was virtually unanimous on the question of protection for refugees and resistance to Pétain and the Germans, and the pastor of the Reformed Church, the president of the college, and the principal of the public school all were interned for a while in a Vichy concentration camp. They are back now, giving even greater leadership; but they are not at all adulated or unchallenged in the day-by-day work of the town, the schools, and the church. Our farmer and village neighbors are too much like Vermonters for that ever to happen. Over one hundred of the men were prisoners of war in Germany for more than four years, but most of them also are back. Of those whom the Gestapo took off, one of our teachers, a young village doctor, and most of a dormitory full of boys have not returned. There are other students, French, Jewish, German, who survived Nazi death camps and are able to enjoy and enrich the campus life of the Collège Cévenol.

The Collège is one of a half-dozen ongoing institutions created by members of the parish in these last ten years of widespread destruction. There were also launched a consumers' co-operative grocery store, a producers' co-operative for artisans, a manual training shop for boys, and a mutual aid society of Protestant families which has built and opened a simple auditorium where twice a week good films are shown and where concerts and cultural events are held. The Messageries Evangéliques, a kind of church press and bookstore, much needed by French Protestantism was conceived and created by a church men's worker in the last years of the war. Half a dozen children's homes were started during the war, paying affairs in some cases, for refugees from menaced French cities or interned children from Spain, from central Europe or elsewhere. Some of these survive today either as boardinghouses for Collège students or as philanthropic institutions where underprivileged children

from city slums or even penal institutions are cared for by religiously motivated workers of various nationalities. In the same spirit and especially with Swiss help, a fine farm property has been slowly transformed into a farm school where it is hoped that farm boys of the region will come to learn modern agricultural methods. Two winters ago we started a men's club that embraces not only Protestants but Catholics and communists too; it settled on "Groupe Contact" for a name and on the study of peace organization for its main job. An International Y.M.C.A. camp has been located on the Lignon just below town.

Sometimes it seems most obvious to me that "works" will never save us, as my neo-Calvinist friends never tire of saying, and, in fact, more probably they will kill us! What makes all these activities meaningful is the deep feeling most of us have of working with a team, working against time, working at a village crossroads of the nations. The Collège, for example, where I teach half-time, shelters in buildings provided largely by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the Congregational Christian Service Committee, the American Friends Service Committee, and the Presbyterian Reconstruction Fund, students of eight or ten lands, boys and girls. The teachers come from as many countries. For three summers now volunteer work camps, led by the C.C.S.C. and recruiting from many lands, have simultaneously built up the campus and international friendship. For two summers we have carried on truly international seminars on international relations, with help from the American Friends Service Committee, in which well over one hundred adults of at least a dozen nationalities, German and Italian and Finnish included, have taken part.

The other half of my time I put into church work with adults. In the name of the parish, I have acted as chaplain to two hundred and fifty German prisoners of war in several near-by camps until the dispersion of the last of these prisoners in our region on the first of July, 1948. When either of our pastors needs a lift, I conduct the service or preach in the village church. The pastors' association on the mountains meets all day once each month and their fraternal work sessions have taught me much about contemporary French Protestantism. Then there is the everlasting taxiing from the station to the house with those indispensable packages from America, and after my wife has sorted them and decided which should go to which distribution center, there is more taxiing to do. Happily the need for such material help *seems* to be at an end.

All this totals up to an assignment in the "Mission of Fellowship to the Churches of Europe," decided upon by the General Council in 1942 and carried out by the American Board. Nobody knew then what such a resident delegate of our American Congregational churches could do. The leaders at Chambon were looking for just such a tie; so our family was sent three years ago and instructed to use our limited capacities in whatever ways the local leaders felt would most help. Since everything goes on under conditions of general crisis, no simple specialization is possible. I have taught English, modern history, economic geography, driven a three-ton truck, laid out a foundation line for a new building, shopped for nonexistent construction materials, baptized, administered communion, and preached. In the last few months I have traveled in a team with some of my French colleagues on a mission of reconciliation that took us into thirty-five different German towns and cities. My vacation this last summer was spent in the fascinating work of serving as private advisor and research aid to my old university friend Dr. Charles Malik, now President of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

Our Congregational mission in France is completely devoid of denominational self-seeking. It is, above all, a symbol of our awareness of the especially acute problems and inspiring faith of the French Christians—a symbol of our own need in the American churches to go humbly with them to that school whose only Master is Christ. It is not only in their country that some voices confidently predict "the end of Christianity," and it is not only they who, in the face of such predictions, are learning to respond:

No! Our hope cannot be stamped out, for our faith is not founded on what men call "Christianity," even less on "Christian civilization." Christ does not let himself be confined in these words. Our unique assurances and our unshatterable hope are in the living person of Christ, Lord and Master of all men. He is present today in humanity's hard toil and strenuous struggle. Across the convulsions of history, behold the approaching hour when his peace and justice shall reign upon the earth. This reign is coming, and no power can delay its dawn. Nothing can take from us this, our sure hope.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Francis Bosc, p. 223 of the Epilogue of a book written by a team of pastors—L'Équipe de Gouvieux—and published in 1947 by Éditions Oberlin of Strasbourg under the title: *Enquêtes sur les valeurs spirituelles à Paris*. This volume, together with another published in 1945 in the Catholic series "Présences" by the Librairies Plon in Paris, *Protestantisme français* by Marc Boegner, André Siegfried and others, gives an excellent introduction to the inner and outer life of the Huguenot churches in this century. I have freely drawn upon them in writing this article.

# The God Concept in Alcoholics Anonymous

GEORGE A. LITTLE

## I

**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**, which now has 1,700 groups with 70,000 members and an influence far beyond its membership, is a spiritual movement, a faith cure for alcoholism. Men and women find that they have been trying to live without God, and then they discover how to live with God. That gives a different set to the sails. Or, as one expressed it, the roots of his mind reached down and grasped a new soil. It is a leap of faith to be able to believe that there is a God personal to oneself.

The distinctive novelty is that each alcoholic is allowed to choose his own concept of God. There is full liberty of belief and no end to the varieties of belief. Therein Alcoholics Anonymous differs from the churches which require belief in certain sets of dogmas. An alcoholic refuses to accept these ready-made: he wants to make his own. In A. A. he is encouraged to do so, with this rider, that he obey the Higher Power as he understands it. That is intriguing. That places the responsibility on the alcoholic. *He* is on trial, not an organization, a book, a creed, or a sacrament. Can he act according to his own faith?

Every person has some belief, more or less vague, in a creative, life-giving force, a universal mind or oversoul. Alcoholics Anonymous begins by thinking of this as a Power rather than a Person. It works unseen as electricity, may be thought of like gravitation, evolution, or growth. Thought is a power, good will is a power, trust is a power. Trying to visualize the Higher Power is a hindrance rather than a help. Formulas are of little value. Like the wind, the spirit can be felt but not seen. Instead of expecting ecstasies, visions, trances, one finds God in what is; contact may be made through gratitude.

Surrender to the Higher Power is not difficult for alcoholics, because

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for years they have surrendered to a lower power. Alcohol has a power, an intoxicating power. It gives a lift, euphoria, escape, release, cessation from fear and worry, a lightening of reality, forgetfulness, stupor, and sleep. In time, however, there are craving and compulsion, memory blanks, shakes, sweats, headaches, and hangovers. One man after a bout felt as though he had seven skulls. In devotion to this autocratic tyrant alcoholics will surrender thought, time, money, health, friends, and vocation. To surrender to the Higher Power involves no more exacting a demand than the surrender they have made to alcohol, perhaps over a drinking period of twenty years.

## II

Experienced A. A. practitioners, while admitting that they are only amateur psychologists, are wise enough not to begin by demanding beliefs. They work on thoughts, desires, attitudes, relationships, purposes, and habits. They are agreed that the root trouble is in the thinking, not in the drinking. At one meeting of a rather intellectual group the drink problem was not directly mentioned. Half a dozen speakers rang the changes on freedom from fears, surrender of resentments, cultivation of good will, positive help to others, building up a sense of dependence upon the Higher Power. When the inner life is brought under discipline the outward conduct is largely self-regulated.

The program of recovery is absorbed rather than learned, caught rather than taught. Listening to speakers, private conversations with alcoholics who are now happily and contentedly sober, reading the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* and pamphlet literature, and picking up fragments of truth will produce a transforming change. This may be sudden or gradual, and there is little concern as to which. Often the slow recoveries prove to be very sure, but the ladder of rehabilitation has these rungs, not necessarily in this order: honesty, humility, tolerance, concern for others, inner contentment, radiant happiness, a new standard of values, faith. Religious people would describe this as conversion: A. A.'s are content to speak of a personality change.

No one is more surprised at the transformation than the alcoholic himself. Like the lady in the fairy tale he is inclined to say "This is none of I." An army man, a heavy drinker for thirty-five years, had the temperament of a sergeant-major even after he became a colonel. Now he is mellow, tender, as sacrificial as once severe. Before a group of medical men he said, "I have had a personality change." A psy-

chiatrist checked him by saying, "My dear fellow, you can't have a personality change." "Well, at least I'm under new management," replied the A. A.

Spiritual power is frequently found on the lower levels of mysticism. The inner voice is a ready mentor. An inebriate who had panhandled all over North America had an obsession against religion, fearing that it meant letters of fire in the sky, voices from the clouds, or a dramatic emotional upheaval. It was suggested to him that he spend five minutes each morning planning his day with his conscience, how he would use his time and spend his money, the mood in which he would meet his family, the sense of responsibility he would have in his work. He discovered that as soon as he listened, the inner voice spoke. He found he could be spiritual in a very practical way without seeing visions or dreaming dreams.

A high-strung man with perplexing business cares took liquor to get to sleep at night. In time he would go to sleep with a full jug of wine at his bedside: later he would waken with an empty wine jug in bed with him. One morning he passed out. A friend said, "One tenth the attention you give to gin, if given to God, could make you happy." The experiment was tried. Each day he lists the commonplace things for which he is thankful, the mistakes of yesterday he wishes to avoid today, the people whose friendship he ought to keep in repair, the duties which are "musts" for that day. With a gleeful grin he tells others: "Give God the first ten minutes of every day and he will give you back the whole twenty-four hours all different." This simple plan has freed hundreds.

At 2:30 A.M. a wise A. A. worker was aroused out of his sleep. A taxi had deposited a chronic at his door. The moment he was admitted to the hall the chronic shouted out: "I don't believe in God, or Bible, or church, or prayer. I am a free thinker." The reply was "O.K., my boy. Nobody wants you to believe anything if you don't want to. That's your business." The two went to the kitchen and had plentiful coffee. Before daybreak the A. A. man said: "There is no use discussing prayer. The only thing about prayer that is any good is praying. I am going to pray for you." Which he did, humbly, trustingly, and in colloquial terms. Then the drunk was told he could pray, too, if he felt like it. His first petition was "O God, help me to have faith in this guy." He is still sober, back home again living with his wife.

## III

It is this experimental, demonstration offer that is the key to A. A. Controversy, argument, and dogmatism are avoided. Everything is on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. "It worked for me, it might work for you." The goal is far greater than merely to stop drinking. In itself that may not be of very much help. To be conscious of not drinking and still wanting to drink is just about as distracting a state of mind as being under the influence of alcohol. The big positive goal is happy and contented sobriety, a rewarding and satisfying way of living. It is a distinct privilege to be an alcoholic if it leads to living twenty-four hours at a time without fear and in good will toward people and in humble dependence upon God. Restoration to sanity is abundant proof of the working of a Higher Power.

Prayer becomes a reality, usually in everyday forms of speech. Rhetorical demands, purple-patch phrases, snatches of liturgies are replaced by simple but earnest desires. One man says each evening, "Thank you, God, for a sober day." Next morning he prays, "Please, God, another day like yesterday." Even a spot of prayer such as that is an anchor by which to hold. An A. A. sober for six months went into a sudden panic. He found himself entering his favorite bar. Involuntarily he ejaculated, "O God, save me." In five seconds he was walking down the street cool and collected, every butterfly gone from his stomach. Another man hearing his stepdaughter in hysterics cried for help as to what to do. He was given the right words to say and soon the child was out skating. His verdict is that "the Higher Power works fast." To hear the A. A.'s recite the Lord's Prayer is an experience in worship. "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." That is a life-and-death matter. Our desires are our real prayers, not what we say with the lips.

One helpful approach is to think of God as the Truth-making Power. The typical alcoholic insists on making his own interpretation of the universe and he anticipates the Day of Judgment by pronouncing condemnation on all and sundry. His dislikes are stronger than his likes. Criticism is his mental habit rather than appreciation. It is an initial step in humility to admit that truth is ordained of God. Mathematicians did not decree the multiplication table, nor musicians the octave, astronomers the calendar, orators the alphabet, mariners the magnetic compass. When truth is accepted as from God, intellectual conceit begins to vanish. The alcoholic

learns to work with the laws of God instead of against them. Curiously enough the mind starts to discover new truth and to act upon it until every day becomes a voyage of discovery into the many-sided truths of God. Mind and morality thus have a constant interplay.

In simple, even primitive fashion, members of Alcoholics Anonymous come to think of the Higher Power as the Hero of Eternity. Long before we were born the Higher Power was governing and ordaining: long after we are gone that same Power will be ruling and overruling. Do not be fussed, little man. Today is all you need think about. The rhythm of day and night becomes a contact with God. Living one day at a time can be an act of faith, a response of trust. One man returning from a five-thousand-mile selling trip states: "To travel without fear is a new experience. I cannot become accustomed to it. I never will become accustomed to it." On a long, cold bus trip over an icy road, the one other passenger produced a bottle and offered a drink which was refused. The ability to refuse a drink offered in kindness and in the desire to help, to refuse graciously but finally, was the high light of the whole trip. To him it was the grace of God. It is in such experiences of protection and deliverance that A. A.'s become aware of the Living God.

The thought of the Higher Power is usually quite individual and may be decidedly unconventional. One man took his idea from a picture of flowers and birds. Just as the sun sends light and warmth, so he conceives of the Higher Power sending truth and love to him. One man, cursing himself as he shaved, heard a little bird singing outside his window. The bird was adjusted to its environment, but he, a university graduate, was not. Now he is. Another learned faith by seeing an engineer take five hundred passengers out of a railway station on one green light. There would be more signals as he went along. Another saw a bay freeze over. At first the ice was paper thin, by midwinter it was three feet thick, making ice from underneath. Could his soul grow imperceptibly like that? Another was told that big doors swing on little hinges. A. A. is the little hinge on which his future sobriety now swings.

#### IV

The personality change can be sudden, unexpected, and involuntary. A well-seasoned drinker, after two months of sobriety, was asked to speak at a meeting. He answered that as yet he had nothing to say. "Then just say that you have nothing to say," he was told. When called to

speak he announced that for the sake of politeness he could not refuse but "actually I have nothing to say, for nothing has happened to me." Then he paused. After a somewhat painful silence he said quietly, "Something has happened to me," and sat down. Two months later an old friend asked what did happen. He replied: "As I was saying I had nothing to say, suddenly I knew that at long last I had surrendered to goodness. All my life I had been debating and holding back. I have been different ever since and I have not the slightest desire for a drink." Without conscious effort his personality was unified.

Rehabilitation may follow a Christian pattern. One man after thirty years of hard drinking made an inventory of what drink had cost him. He became convinced that he was a fool, and he did not like being a fool. In his own words this is his story: "I decided to investigate religion. I read what the apostles had to say about Jesus Christ. Christ came into my life and liquor went out. Christ has stayed in my life and liquor has stayed out. Nothing goes out until something else comes in."

The spiritual aspect of the program is by no means camouflaged but it is not made too obvious at first. The big book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, sometimes described as the A. A. Bible, has three hundred references to the Higher Power. One member spent a Christmas Day counting them. Six of the Twelve Steps refer to God. The official magazine, *The Grapevine*, unhesitatingly refers to the Higher Power as God. With increasing frequency at group meetings older members say quite openly that they are staying sober only with the help of God. Surprising coincidences happen, and the explanation naïvely offered is "Somebody Upstairs." The intimacy does not come from irreverence but from trust. However slight and vague the faith at first, progress is steadily made toward a more mature and adult thought of God.

In social life an alcoholic is regarded as a misfit. Medicine looks upon him as a non-co-operative patient, very often poor pay. The law deals with him as a criminal and sends him to a jail. Psychiatry diagnoses him as a mental case and confines him in an institution. The church tells him that he is a sinner and must repent. His family has convinced him that he is hopeless. Against this background of despair, *Alcoholics Anonymous* comes along telling him that God is in him, that God can be in him as much as God can be anywhere, that if God is not in him God is not everywhere and so cannot be God. By the witness of another alcoholic, now sober, the life is breathed into his soul. Without soul and

spirit the body is only an empty shell. A few even go so far as to say that God himself may draw vital strength and increase of being from their fidelity. If so, they, each one of them, may be important in the whole scheme of things. A surrendered life, they hold, can be of use to God.

Strangely enough, no attempt is made to induce conviction of sin, awaken a sense of guilt, or lead to a period of remorse. It is quite unnecessary anyway. An alcoholic's conscience has told him all this a thousand times. Remorse weakens and is seldom redemptive. The better way is to live today. Yesterday is past, you cannot do much about it. You cannot undo what you have done. Waste no time on regret. Tomorrow is not here yet. Have no fears. The Higher Power has dealt with far harder cases than yours. A miracle might happen, if you will just take it easy. Live one day at a time. When you came into the world there was air for your lungs: has the Higher Power ceased to care for you? Restraint from condemning increases the chance of cure.

Usually alcoholics are gun shy of religion. They may have tried it over and over and it has not worked, so they are more responsive to psychology. Fortunately there is enough psychology in the A. A. program for beginners to go on with. Some find that the psychology is sufficient to enable them to achieve sobriety; others keep seeking more than the laws of the mind, and by the practice of meditation advance to the laws of the spirit. It is a mistake to force growth. One man who has been instrumental in over three hundred recoveries says, "I have learned not to look for results too soon: I know they will come later." He himself is not content until he leads his protégés to definite faith, but he knows that time must be given for a seed of truth to germinate. If out of the Twelve Steps in the program the prospect is only ready for one or two, he is urged to work on these. The others will follow later.

Will power is discounted in A. A. "Use your will" has been useless advice to them. They have the will but not the power. They do not have won't power, let alone will power. Promises, pledges, prayers have not availed. Then they are told how to replace their puny wills by the will of God. The unit actually begins to lean on the strength of the All. It is found that the imagination governs the will. As one holds the picture of himself as a capable, controlled citizen, thoughts are focused in that direction, desires become conscious, emotions become strong, and the whole personality goes into action. Instead of trying to whip up a weak will into doing what it is unable to do, one finds will power re-

stored by the use of thought, desire, emotion, creative imagination. In six months the will can become stronger to say "No" than formerly as routine it said "Yes." Such restorations of will power are frequent in A. A.

## V

The changed attitude to life is indicated by new reading habits. Murder mysteries and sex novels are often replaced by worth-while magazines, thoughtful books, and devotional manuals. So eager is the mind for truth that serious reading is done. There is a special interest in psychology and psychiatry. Religious classics have a new vogue. Pamphlet literature is kept in circulation. The leader of a group of two hundred men and women said to a visitor, "They are a tough-looking bunch, but you would be surprised to know the amount of Bible reading and prayer going on." Another evidence of spiritual experience is the number of newspaper articles and booklets being produced by members.

Men and women who have had medical care repeatedly, been sent to mental hospitals and sanitariums, been given conditioned reflex treatment, gone to alcoholic farms, or taken Keeley Cures, ask why these so often fail and Alcoholics Anonymous is having increasing success. One answer is that these treatments (for which we are thankful; they are much better than none) were only body cures; and in some degree fear was the motive for reform. They were also very expensive. Alcoholics Anonymous is cheap: there are no membership dues or entrance fees. Instead of a receding memory, A. A. is a growing experience of fact, fellowship, and faith. It is enlarged opportunity and cumulative happiness. The old has gone, the new has come and keeps coming. The unhappy past is forgotten in happiness and hope. "He who rises quickly and continues his race is as if he had never fallen." There are great days ahead.

The movement is strictly nondenominational. Catholics, Protestants, and Jews work together as brothers, though very few Jews are alcoholics. No effort is made to win others to any particular faith. The organization seeks to be inclusive rather than exclusive. No one is barred by age, sex, race, or creed. The one condition is the sincere desire to stop drinking. Nearly every club has one or two evangelical atheists, usually born of Christian parents, who strangely have conserved a Christian spirit. After a few months they usually agree that they never were atheists and anyway it did not make much difference. They stood on the

same earth, breathed the same air, and talked the same language as others. Atheism had never been much help in keeping sober. Atheism, in fine, requires too much credulity: it is rather difficult to believe that nothing made everything and is going nowhere.

How is it that denominational differences can be so completely submerged? One reason is that no one is asked to give up anything but is urged to use what he already has. In time it is found that the A. A. program of recovery is founded upon universal spiritual experience. Jesuits affirm that it is similar to the principles of Ignatius Loyola. Quakers say that it makes use of meditation and the group conscience. Moral Rearmament people detect the four absolutes. Salvation Army officers are reminded of their knee drill. Methodists say it resembles John Wesley's discipline. Christian Science says it is closely akin. Unity, New Thought, Mysticism all think that their programs have been adopted and adapted. A. A. is a synthetic product with a pragmatic test. What does not work is discarded: what works is retained.

Do A. A.'s go back to church? Some do and some don't. Much depends upon early training. Some have a childhood belief to which they return with a deeper understanding. As a rule Roman Catholics resume their religious duties and observances—to them religion means their church. Some Protestants become active church workers, others go a time or two and report that "my minister doesn't know about God." Quite a few accept A. A. as their church. It gives faith and fellowship even though lacking much formal worship. Church relationships, like so much else in A. A., are left to individual preference and choice, without any overhead rulings. Those who do attend church find new meanings in Scripture and sermon, hymns and prayers. A. A.'s become spiritually sensitive and morally responsive.

The churches will be wise not to try to guide or control this movement but to learn from it. Sympathetic co-operation is being shown by providing church halls as meeting places and by directing problem parishioners to A. A. The churches may learn something from the flexibility of A. A. organization, the power of fellowship, the possibility of lay evangelism, the transforming power of truth, the influence of common interest groups and the originality of nontechnical language and nondogmatic theology. This movement is of the people, by the people, for the people. But the new wine cannot be put into old bottles. It must find its own carriers.

# Some Strange Fruit of Old Testament Criticism

JAMES B. PRITCHARD

## I

WERE I AN ARTIST with commission to portray the popular conception of a theological faculty, I would not hesitate for a moment to reserve the longest beard and the most distant eyes for the occupant of the chair of Old Testament literature. He would get this characterization not because of what I know of the appearance of many who teach this subject, but because of the antiquity of the material with which he deals. The very name of the subject suggests distance from life as lived today. Here the little-known Melito, Bishop of Sardis, who is credited with using the name "Old Testament" for the first time, might be blamed. But to censure the Bishop for this unfortunate title would do little to erase the widespread feeling that the Old has been replaced by the New, or that, at least, it has been fully studied, understood, and its ideas exploited in the long history of the Christian church. There is a general feeling that insights from such a distant past—to say nothing of such a different culture—are not apt to be fresh with meaning for today. Today many are disposed to regard this collection of books about as one would a collection of medieval armor, as a relic of the past we have outgrown.

Further, the demands for technical competence in the field of such an extensive literature in a language now dead have been a heavy burden for those who aspired to meet them. As a price for a place among his colleagues, the teacher of Old Testament literature has had to undergo long training in language, history, and technical skills of criticism. This onerous burden has more than once dissipated enthusiasm and wrought such a warping of perspective as to turn the speech of the teacher into the jargon of a technician. The demands for a study of the minutiae of Hebrew roots and Akkadian signs, for the sifting of the words of all the

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former commentators upon a passage—these have often burdened the conscientious scholar so that he has no clear, ringing message for his time. Consideration for fact and regard for detail have often snuffed out any creative imagination which would have made the bones live. The misfortune of the circumstance is rendered no less tragic in that it can easily be explained. The anomaly remains that too often the interpreters of such a live book have been rendered so dead.

But, one may ask, have not the preachers been able to find relevance in the Hebrew writings? What use is made in the churches of the Old Testament, to which we give lip service as containing the word of God? I suggest four prevailing attitudes among Christian leaders.

1. There are those who ignore it. The assumption is that all the values of the Old Testament have been salvaged in the Christian writings, or that, if there are bits of truth there, the cost in effort is too great to pick them out of their Jewish and prescientific setting and relate them to life which is essentially Greek in its presuppositions. Among the more conscientious preachers there lurks the fear that they may misuse a story in the Old Testament, by building a sermon on an interpretation which has long been abandoned in scholarly circles. This is true of men who have studied enough of the criticism to know that much is gloss, later accretion, and pious emendation. Graduates of seminaries know that often there is more than meets the eye in a simple story and that understanding is a difficult business. Why bother about it? Preach from the material of which one is more sure! This is an understandable attitude; it is fear before the complexities which the scholars have created for the reader of even simple Hebrew prose.

2. Braver are those who regard the Old Testament as a valuable source book, a compendium of fine phrases which are ready at hand for texts about which may be gathered ideas for a sermon. Contemporary novelists and Hollywood producers have also discovered the Hebrew genius for making a fine phrase and have recently given many books and pictures names taken bodily from the Hebrew Bible. Parts of the book lend themselves particularly to creating a spirit of worship. This is true of the Psalms. In the Authorized Version they have music and rhythm, and furnish, when read well, a mellowness to the service much in the same way as does the music of the organ. Selections are made more for the mood which their beauty sets than for the distinctive ideas which they assert. Neither of these practices, that of picking out strik-

ing phrases nor the liturgical use of the Psalms, can claim to be serious use of the material by the Christian churches.

3. Others there are who single out a particular segment of the thirty-nine books and make it for all practical purposes the canon. Since the early days of this century, when the social gospel came to be emphasized, the prophets—particularly the eighth-century ones—became the vogue. To this very day, by far the greater number of popular books published about the Old Testament are books on the prophets. They flood the market; there have been a dozen in the last few years. The prophet has come to be spelled with a capital *P*, while the priest has become a term of reproach—and this even with religious educators, despite the obvious parallelism between the functions of the two groups. Wisdom literature, history, philosophy of history, theology have been for the moment overlooked as having any interest for the Christian, if one may judge by the books which come from the presses. This wave of enthusiasm for the Hebrew prophets amounts to a limiting of the use of the Old Testament to make it serve a particular view with regard to the content of religion. The direction is wholesome, to be sure, but it is a warped and consequently a subjective approach to the religious literature, doomed to distort the total picture of Israel's religious significance.

4. A fourth use made of the Old Testament is to supply proof texts for doctrine found in the New. An idea is frequently thought to be more valid if it is stated in the Old as well as in the New Testament. This search often calls for strained exegesis. The assumption is that the Old Testament has to be decoded. God spoke in riddles. Ingenuity is required to find Pauline theology in the eighth-century prophets. The more extreme users of this method have found events of our own day hinted at in the Bible: the Russian revolution, the world wars, the airplane. These startling revelations by ingenious searchers have turned the Old Testament for them into an awe-inspiring collection of riddles. Such prostitution of Hebrew literature thrives particularly on Daniel and the apocalyptic portions of the prophets. Here interpretation lapses into the vagaries of the queer.

These four attitudes toward the material in the Old Testament by no means complete the picture of how the book is used today; they do suggest that there is taking place in the supreme court of everyday practice some radical changes in the doctrine of the inspiration of this part of our traditional Scriptures. For to ignore is to label irrelevant.

To confine one's reading and use to some particular segment of the material, and ignore the remainder, amounts to the canonization of this section and the exclusion of the remainder from canonical status. Is it that some parts of the ancient religious literature serve no particular need today? Perhaps we can best understand our present attitude toward the literature by reviewing briefly the uses to which it has been put in the Christian church.

## II

The early Christians inherited from Judaism the canon: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. Their Bible was ready at hand, available in Greek translation, an arsenal in the conflict with Judaism. When Jews assailed the new sect on the ground of its disregard for the ceremonial system of the Law, Christians countered with quotations from the Prophets, or, as did Justin, they explained the elaborate ceremony as having been imposed by God for disciplinary purposes. When confronted with the problem of explaining the recent origin of Christianity in the light of its claims as a universal religion, apologists searched to find in the Jewish scriptures predictions of the central incidents upon which the new faith depended.

The claims for the importance of the person of Christ were substantiated by prophecies construed as predictions. By means of Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, and other passages, the story of the Passion was undergirded as having a significance far beyond the few years which had transpired since the events. The Old Testament became the indispensable source for the defense of the gospel against its Jewish critics. So convenient did the earlier defenders of the faith find prediction in the Old ready to confirm claims of the New, that the Old Testament became a powerful force in underlining the events and doctrines of the new religion. As a result of the theory of predictive prophecy, elements of the new faith which could be supported by words in the Old Testament were, accordingly, given a prominence above some of the more unique features of the new faith. The result was to weld the two scriptures into an inseparable unity. The basis for this union, it must be remembered, was the presupposition of prophecy as prediction. This theory saved the Old Testament as a vital part of the scriptures of the Christian church. It first defended the new faith; then molded it, in a certain sense, into its likeness.

Jewish critics of the Christian movement were in time joined by Marcion and the Gnostics; but the latter critics fought on different

ground. Marcion contended for something like a historical view and rejected the convenient method of the search for predictions in the prophecies. That Marcion did not prevail in his attempt to cut Christianity away from its Old Testament moorings made possible Christianity as a religion deeply rooted in events of history—events which reached back far beyond its immediate origin.

Allegory, a method widely used elsewhere than in Christian circles, was seized upon as a most fruitful means of interpreting the more ancient literature. The *Letter of Aristeas* explains the Mosaic regulation with regard to diet in a way to serve some practical ends in the church. Says its author: "For the division of the hoof and the separation of the claws are intended to teach us that we must discriminate between our individual actions, with a view to the practice of virtue. . . . For all animals 'which are cloven-footed and chew the cud' represent to the initiated the *symbol* of memory. For the act of chewing the cud is nothing else than the reminiscence of life and existence." Justin's ingenuity was rewarded by finding the cross typified by the tree of life in Eden, by the rod of Moses, by Aaron's rod which budded, by the rod and staff of the Twenty-third Psalm, by the stick cast by Elisha into the water to make the axe swim, and by the rod that pointed out Judah as the father of Tamar's sons.

As Christianity became more secure, the use made of the Old Testament was less to prove than to teach and instruct. The method of allegory was used widely but less urgently. There was now opportunity to define more carefully the meanings of words and to write long explanatory notes on individual words in the Bible. One Cassiodorus (fifth century) sought to clarify the sense of the word *cathedra* in Psalm 1:1 by the following precision: "A *chair* is a form composed of matter, suitable for seating, which receives our curves softly from behind, and like a cunning receptacle enfolds us, bent into its lap."<sup>1</sup>

Some of the earlier commentators, ever anxious to expound the meaning of any passage, were not quite so ready to limit themselves to what they knew as was Stephen Langton. At Numbers 11:7, "the manna was like coriander seed," he adds the wistful note, "We could discourse lengthily on this if only the nature and quality of *coriander seed* were known to us."<sup>2</sup>

The paces through which a preacher sometimes put a text is illus-

<sup>1</sup> B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*. Oxford University Press, 1941, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

trated by an excerpt from Langton's sermon on the statement in Judges 3, "Shamgar . . . slew of the Philistines six hundred men with a ploughshare." Recalling the fact that Ehud slew only one man with his sharp sword, Langton hastens to point out a moral for the Christian preacher: "See! This makes clear that a preacher should not always use polished, subtle preaching, like Aod's [Ehud's] sword, but sometimes a ploughshare, that is, rude, rustic exhortation. Very often a popular story [*exemplum vulgare*] is more effective than a polished, subtle phrase. Aod killed one man only with a two-edged sword, Shamgar six hundred with a ploughshare; so, whereas the laity are easily converted by rude, unpolished preaching, a sermon to clerks will draw scarcely one of them from his error."<sup>3</sup>

The wide use of this type of allegorizing led to the loss of the Old Testament as a source of authority. It could, if dealt with in this way, be made to say or to teach anything. Luther and Calvin both protested against this turning the Scriptures one way and another. Luther in his preface to Isaiah urged the reader to study the history recorded in Kings in order to understand the particular situation in which the prophet uttered his speeches.

The historical method of interpretation may be said to have begun with the nineteenth century. It had been anticipated in Richard Simon, Spinoza, John Spencer, and others; De Wette's dissertation, which asserted that Deuteronomy is later than the rest of the Pentateuch, appeared in 1805. With it, literary criticism of the Old Testament began in dead earnest.

The results of literary criticism were long known in scholarly circles before they were brought to the attention of the churches. Wellhausen in Germany may be credited with doing more than anyone else in popularizing the views of higher criticism there. His work in the *Prolegomena* is classic for its clarity, lucidity, and logical presentation of a most difficult subject matter. The views of Wellhausen have become too familiar—in fact, they could be called orthodox in the field of Old Testament studies—to state in detail. In brief, it may be said that Wellhausen expressed a general skepticism toward the documents of the Old Testament, that he applied the evolutionary principle to religion, and that he rejected *a priori* any appeal to supernaturalism.

The year 1882 is important in the history of Old Testament in-

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210.

terpretation, for it was then that Wellhausen felt compelled to leave the Protestant theological faculty at Greifswald and join the faculty of philosophy and literature. As he put the decision he left the theological faculty "freely in the consciousness that he no longer stood upon the ground of the evangelical church or of Protestantism."

In Scotland the outstanding biblical scholar was W. Robertson Smith. For his views—in many ways they were more apologetic than Wellhausen's—he was relieved of his chair at Aberdeen and was lost to the church as a teacher in one of its theological schools. He also found refuge on the faculty of a university.

These two decisions at about the same time, the one of free will and the other made by a church, are indicative of a trend. Up until this time the church and Judaism had been able to claim most of the important workers in the field of Old Testament studies. Afterward some of the more important figures in this field were to appear in the universities and museums. Particularly apparent is the shift away from the theological school in the realms of linguistic and archeological studies which bear upon an understanding of the Old Testament. Today the Assyriologists—and Assyriology holds as much promise as any allied discipline for new light on the Hebrew Bible—are to be found entirely outside the strictly theological schools; the outstanding Palestinian archeologist in this country is a university professor; the three important museums for research in the biblical field are all in connection with large universities and quite independent of schools maintained by the churches. Perhaps it can be shown that this loss of the centers of biblical learning started in the 1880's with the loss of Wellhausen and of Robertson Smith from the church. At any rate, it is a safe prediction that the bulk of new light to be shed upon the Bible in the next few decades will come from sources outside Protestant church institutions. This is not to say that those who work under secular auspices are unfriendly to the church. It is rather to state a simple fact: Old Testament scholarship in its wider outreaches now belongs to the universities and not to the theological schools of the various churches.

### III

All of this has some bearing on the history of interpretation. On the one hand the biblical studies of the last century—carried on for the most part under ecclesiastical auspices—have borne the strange fruit of a vigorous secular interest in Old Testament history, language, culture.

Once the Hebrew Bible was studied for what it meant to the Christian movement; this utilitarian motive spurred on countless scholars, devoted men who worked diligently to further a cause. Now students of history, language, culture have found in the once sacred field material of interest sufficient to impel them to productive activity. This is a strange fruit indeed, that those who once considered sacred history their own peculiar property now find themselves outdistanced in energy and enthusiasm, and often in insights, by those who are motivated only by a thirst to know what happened and what was said.

The theologian was for a long time the Bible's most able interpreter; he can no longer make that claim. The secular historian, the linguist, the student of comparative literature have been able to make remarkable progress in extracting the meanings of the ancient texts. The theologian and the preacher find themselves very much in the same position as the Israelites in the period of the Judges, who were compelled for lack of knowledge to go down to the Philistines, "to sharpen every man his plow-share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock." It is remarkable indeed that a book for centuries a sacred literature, preserved and interpreted by men of deep religious feelings and loyalties, should now have passed into other hands better able to understand it.

That there is beginning to be seen a reaction to this shift will occasion no surprise. It bears the name of "biblical theology"; it is not the older biblical theology of Schultz, Oehler, or Davidson, but a rebirth of Old Testament theology, as a recent article has characterized it. At its best the movement is represented by Walther Eichrodt, whose *Theologie des alten Testaments* began to appear in 1933. The movement may be regarded as a reaction to the shifting of the center of gravity of biblical research from the theological schools to the universities.

The complaint of this new school is that the historical approach to the Old Testament has rendered the material useless to the Christian, that Wellhausenism has proved to be sterile as far as the Christian movement is concerned, that the Old Testament can only be known in terms of the New Testament faith toward which it moves. The Bible is a unity, different in kind from any other religious material. Its secrets cannot be unlocked by the presuppositions of the evolutionary scheme or by men who do not accept the presuppositions upon which the biblical material was written. And to list a complaint frequently heard against the prevailing methods of criticism, the scholars do not take seriously the

material with which they seek to work. In short, objectivity is an impossible tool for getting at the deepest meaning of the literature; only the initiated can fully understand. To list these views is to recall, besides Eichrodt, such names as Vischer, Koehler, Rowley, Phythian-Adams, A. C. Welch, G. E. Wright, James Smart, and a new journal dedicated to this point of view, published in Richmond, Virginia, with the title *Interpretation*. Hardly a month passes without the appearance of an article or a book written from this point of view. Ever careful to acknowledge, in word at least, the results of critical scholarship, the emphasis is predominately upon relevance and upon use.

To sum up the present state of our studies in the literature of the Old Testament, it may not be too much of an oversimplification to say that the fruits of a century of intense study and criticism are two. Both are unexpected, strange: on the one hand a vigorous school dedicated to the sole aim of objectivity in the study of a literature which is essentially subjective in its composition; on the other a growing protest against this approach on the ground that it does not serve the needs of the existing religious institutions. But biblical theology is more than a protest; it is a positive attempt to interpret the ancient material according to the needs, as the movement sees them, of present-day religion.

It is obvious that classical Hebrew literature, the legacy of a particularly gifted and keenly sensitive people, will long remain a subject of research and of appreciation. Those interested in ancient history, literature, folklore, religion will hold it in high regard, certainly, for a long time to come. For such, the labors of almost a century of criticism are invaluable aids to study. But what of the Christian church? We have seen that many of the uses to which the Christian movement has put this part of its Bible have, in the last century, been outmoded. Predictions of events connected with the origin of the faith, allegorical interpretation bent to meet the needs of any particular situation, the doctrine of the qualitative superiority of Israel's faith as a basis for belief in a special revelation—these are some of the ways in which the material has served the church, and, at the same time, these uses have insured its preservation and motivated those who have been its eager students. For a growing number of people these interpretations, so valuable to former generations, have been rendered forever valueless, if not fallacious. Thus, there arises the question, are there still values other than those of interest to the antiquarian? Are there values desperately relevant to the church

which one hopes will emerge? If so, what are they? And what attitudes toward the body of material may serve best to elicit these values?

#### IV

Old Testament history—rather should I say the experience and speculative thought recorded in the documents of the Old Testament—can prove to be a valuable check and balance upon the growth of the Christian church. It may become, if properly understood, an active agent in the making of tomorrow's blueprint. That is, experience in religious faith and institutions may not only check errors, but it may furnish a foundation strong enough for building the kind of religious world for which we hope.

It is almost trite to belabor the point that the Christian religion is rooted deeply in history. Language, historical events, national aspiration, particular needs, individual geniuses who have lived on this very same earth have determined its character. Insights cherished today have arisen generally out of some conflict in the past. The connection between the two Testaments is obvious. The lines Christianity was to follow were drawn long before Jesus. To recall the synagogue, mother of the church; the moral law of Judaism; the concept of one God; the Suffering Servant, is to be reminded of the great debt of Christianity to its mother. God as Father, love, mercy, justice, prayer are some of the ideas which constitute common ground upon which the two faiths, the Hebrew-Jewish and the Christian, stand.

If Christianity is basically a historical religion with Jewish apparen-tation, history of its parent is important. And if a search is worth making into the past, only the best methods are good enough. No objectivity is too rigorous. The biblical historian must have hands clean of prejudice and a pure heart—at least as pure as the best secular historian. What did a man say at Carmel, at Bethel, at Anathoth, at Jerusalem? These questions have to be asked with unabashed candor. Here the virtue of honesty is the sole measuring-stick of the biblical student.

But where do the answers for today's problems lie? Are the solutions to our problems about life's meaning worked out for us in documents handed down? The process is not so simple as that. Situations may be analogous, but they are rarely identical. No ancient prescription fits perfectly present ills. At best, all one can glean is a method of treatment, a way of thinking, a measure of sympathy and understand-

ing. The mantle which the ancient prophet or theologian casts upon his modern disciple is only that of spirit. To look for more from the past is to ask for the impossible and to seek a medium, as Saul called up Samuel's ghost. To be content with less is a display of sheer arrogance and a disdain of the past unbecoming to both Christian and scholar.

The modern student must be warned, then, against looking for too much in the record. It is a record, pages written upon by men. The ideas of these writers were not their own property. Some belonged to the countless generations of men whose insights were preserved by oral tradition and whose lives were caught up into a pattern of law. Aspirations of countless generations were written into mythology. Often unconscious of the sources, the author or editor wrote the texts we employ. To assert that the Old Testament is a record of man's ideas and nothing more is misleading. If one means by man's ideas the ideas which were the peculiar property of those who finally put them in writing, he has failed to understand the nature of what might be termed revelation. On the other hand, if one means by revelation ideas that come from anywhere else than mankind's own thought and life, he is far beyond the realm of experience. To say that the Old Testament is strictly human, man's search, is not to depreciate it. For the modern inquirer the acceptance of this assertion renders the documents valid, capable of use in contemporary life.

The vitality of the Christian church may depend to no small extent upon the willingness to take seriously the evidence of religious experience in the Old Testament. This evidence is from a people whose religious intensity was much more marked than that of the average twentieth-century church-goer. Generally, religion occupied a larger place in life then than now. It was wider in scope—broad enough to include for long periods such matters as public health, education, law, government, and even its fiscal policy. The intensity with which religion was practised, extending as it did to all areas of social life, makes of peculiar value this record.

The value of the length of the record is obvious. In the Old Testament is a history of thought and life extending over a period of at least 1,500 years. Contrast the spread in time of the literature of the New Testament. Its span is probably only a tithe of the period to which the Old Testament witnesses. If observation over an extended time is valuable in the hospital or laboratory, so here. Such evidence as we have

of belief, of hope, of the fashioning of institutions to meet the needs of people in various social situations, is invaluable in the laying of plans for the development of the church.

The church must give this evidence a respectful hearing as it is sifted and evaluated by those who have prepared themselves to cope with its peculiarities. The hearing afforded it must be an honest one. It cannot afford to listen merely for what it wants to hear. To exhibit the condescension of those who turn only to their favorite passages, or to their exuberant commentaries, who seek merely to interpret that part of the book which has been read traditionally, is but a travesty upon an honest hearing of what it has to say.

The modern inquirer must be unafraid to ask large questions of the book. Too long the student has been content with irrelevant questions: Did the walls of Jericho really fall down? Was the Red Sea really opened by a strong wind? What was manna? What did the Temple look like? And the ark? The names of the twelve tribes? Or even J, E, D, P? More pertinent are such questions as: The meaning of the term for God at various stages of Israel's development? The individual and society? Sociological facts in the formation of faith? Modes of worship in the light of social and economic conditions? Skepticism and credulity? Progress and recession in the development of religious ideas? Religious practice as a factor in family and community solidarity? The meaning and the use of mythology in ritual? These suggest avenues of approach to the kind of evidence which might be extracted from the Old Testament and which might prove fruitful in determining the course of contemporary religious life.

To illustrate, take the doctrine of man. One way to define what the Old Testament has to say on this subject is to turn to Genesis 2-3 and take the interpretation generally associated with the story of the "fall of man" as the message of the Old Testament in this particular. To do this is to overlook one of the discoveries of recent research, namely, that this entire section is heavily dependent upon other oriental sources and sets forth a view with regard to the deity which is in direct conflict with the normative view of the Hebrew tradition. Actually the picture of man's nature as portrayed in the entire literature must take into account a vastly broader material. Man portrayed there is a being who is described in the skeptical literature of Job and Qoheleth, in the aspirations of the poor as expressed in the Psalms, in the strict legalism of the

mass of legislative literature as well as in the rapier-like thrusts of reforming prophets. The doctrine of man in the Old Testament is not something to be constructed merely with a concordance; it is a composite of all the stories, songs, maxims, dirges, prayers, of a vast literature. Only one who sees the whole picture of man as he reacted to forces in history over a period of fifteen centuries can formulate accurately a doctrine worthy of the name.

Inquiry such as this requires a sifting of the evidence of the entire extant literature. The love poems of the Song of Songs are then as valuable a constituent of the canon as the favorite Psalms; Qoheleth is as useful as the most pious of the utterances of the law. Happily the canon is useful here in supplying us with enough evidence from different periods and different points of view in the same period with which to frame useful answers to the questions we ask.

If one takes the Old Testament as a pertinent directive—it is the most extensive one we have for a historical religion—it is nothing short of prostitution of its potential value to make it a mere source book for happy phrases and moral stories (few preach from the immoral ones). To use it as a concession to the fact that the faithful regard it as having authority, but with one's tongue in his cheek, is to fail to see it for what it offers to Christian leadership today.

## V

The point at which the enthusiasm of the biblical theology school parts company with the enthusiasm of those who hold views similar to these which I have tried to describe is a fundamental point. The former demand acceptance of certain views before inquiry as a necessary prerequisite to understanding; the latter demand no such acceptance of views, but only an honest hearing of conclusions once they have been established as a part of the belief of the writers. Jew, Catholic, Protestant, pagan meet on common ground; no one, because of previous conditioning, has the advantage over the other. Initiation is not with regard to belief, but in terms of equipment of language, knowledge, and honesty.

The Old Testament is relevant to the church which is to come; it is more than relevant: it is a body of material without which no enduring superstructure can be erected in the name of the Christian cause.

In one of the traditions of Exodus there is an unabashed account of how the Israelites borrowed from the Egyptians silver, gold, and

raiment on the eve of their final departure from Egypt; it ends with the word, "thus they despoiled the Egyptians." I do not defend this questionable ethic, but I see in it a description of what has happened over and over again in the march of history. Israel's faith from the very beginning despoiled its neighbors of significant ideas and insights, making them its very own. Israel was not always thankful for the enrichments from Canaan, from Philistia, from Assyria, but the debt is written large upon the record. Who knows but that the rich stream of interpretation of the Bible—a long and noble history—may now be receiving an irritating gift from the hands of those secular historians who handle it honestly for what it says? Who knows but that this careful sifting of the literature may yield new insights and institutions so badly needed in a new world? The strange fruit may have in it seeds of promise.

# Amsterdam 1948: An Analysis

WALTER M. HORTON

THE AMSTERDAM ASSEMBLY of 1948 has now taken its place in the great sequence of ecumenical gatherings which began with the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910. From Edinburgh three lines of advance toward Christian unity went forth, each marked by a series of world conferences and all converging again at Amsterdam: the missionary line (Jerusalem, 1928; Madras, 1938), the "Life and Work" line (Stockholm, 1925; Oxford, 1937), and the "Faith and Order" line (Lausanne, 1927; Edinburgh, 1937). More recently the Christian Youth Movements have also begun to hold world conferences about every ten years (Amsterdam, 1939; Oslo, 1947), and this fourth line of ecumenical advance crossed the other three at Amsterdam—the place where all roads seemed to meet in 1948.

Amsterdam was, in fact, a mecca for millions in 1948. In honor of Queen Wilhelmina's golden jubilee, which coincided with the second week of the assembly, the city was scrubbed clean and lavishly decorated. For the first time since the war the canals were illuminated at night. There were special exhibits in the art museums, which drew art lovers from all over the world. A world congress of philosophers was held in Amsterdam just preceding the assembly. Amsterdam is a crowded city at any time; but when visitors from many countries, plus a large percentage of the total population of Holland, streamed in for the Queen's jubilee, the resultant crowds were something to see! Streetcars inched along with people hanging on wherever they could get a foothold. Taxis had to avoid the inner city for fear of getting stalled. Night after night the crowds surged through the streets, laughing and singing like a perpetual New Year's celebration in Times Square. London after Amsterdam seemed like a quiet country town.

It was both an inspiration and a disadvantage for the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches to meet in such a setting. It was an inspiration to be in Holland during this time of national thanksgiving,

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so soon after a great catastrophe that tried men's souls; to share the joy of the Dutch people at seeing their first city bright and beautiful again after years of blackout; to sense their strong affection for the House of Orange that has led them through so many crises, and to note the unabashed Christian concern of both the old Queen and the new;<sup>1</sup> to hear echoes at our opening service of the heroic spiritual resistance so recently offered by the Dutch churches—"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." But there were also some practical disadvantages in holding the assembly in Holland at such a time. Amsterdam was so full that participants in the assembly had to be lodged and fed at great distances from one another, and had great difficulty getting about through the crowds. There was little opportunity for personal fellowship. An atmosphere of bustle and confusion surrounded the Concert Hall during plenary sessions and invaded its corridors, where delegates scrambled for copies of the speeches, and staff members sped about on all sorts of necessary errands. It was a very busy, hurried assembly. Had it not been for the friend who saved us hours of time by presenting us with earphones like those used at Lake Success, enabling us to hear simultaneous translations of everything that was said, we should have been still more hurried.

Yet the Amsterdam assembly accomplished great things, which we have now to estimate. It made a demonstration of Christian unity, it did the necessary work of a constituent assembly, and it honestly faced the problems of a disordered world.

### I. A DEMONSTRATION OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

This was the first occasion in modern times when *officially elected delegates of the churches*—351 of them, representing 147 different churches and 44 different countries—met to discuss their relations and their common concerns. Hitherto ecumenical conferences have been attended chiefly by interested individuals. Now that the *churches* were at last face to face, would not their diverse traditions make them spontaneously repel one another? Nothing of the sort occurred. From the moment when they lifted up their voices together at the opening service in the Nieuwe Kerk, to the familiar tune of "Old Hundred," the dele-

<sup>1</sup> Queen Wilhelmina sent us a message expressing her interest in our work, and as one of her last official acts before abdicating, made our secretary, Dr. Visser't Hooft, a Knight of the Order of the Netherlands Lions; her daughter sat on the platform at one of the early sessions, with Prince Bernhard, listening to speeches by Karl Barth and C. H. Dodd.

gates knew that they were deeply one in spite of all their differences, and they ended by announcing that their churches "intend to stay together," from now on.

This is not to say that Amsterdam proved there was *no* mutual repulsion among Christian churches. Before the assembly met, four different Christian bodies announced their nonparticipation in no uncertain terms. The Roman Catholic Church, which had official observers at the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences, decided not to send even observers this time, and warned its members sharply against participating in such gatherings.<sup>2</sup> The Moscow Synod, held during the early summer, dashed all hopes of large Eastern Orthodox participation in the assembly when it condemned the World Council as a nonecclesiastical body with political aims of an "antidemocratic" character. Two groups of conservative Protestants finally expressed their opposition to the World Council by organizing rival world organizations, one of them dramatizing its opposition by holding its meeting in Amsterdam before the assembly began.

Again, there were some repulsions, though far less violent, between those who actually took part in the assembly. There was a slight flare-up of the old antipathy between "Continental" and "Anglo-Saxons." After listening to Karl Barth an American delegate from the Far West summed up his impression as follows: "If I were Barth I'd quit this assembly and go fishing. And when I fished I wouldn't bait my hook nor wet the line. I'd expect the Lord to make the fish flop out of the water right into my frying pan." This impression hardly varies an iota from the one that passed current at Oxford in 1937: "Sit, brothers of the Son of Man, and leave it all to God." Even so, it is important to note that theological differences of this sort do not divide *churches* in any serious way; they cut across denominational lines and divide members of the *same* church.

Actually, however, the theological situation was much less tense at Amsterdam than at Oxford. Anglo-Saxons were much less disposed to identify their own pet plans and programs with God's design, while the Continental Barthians, despite their constant fulmination against human plans, programs, and principles, made it plain that the Christian Church

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<sup>2</sup> There were, however, a few Catholic pressmen, through whom Cardinal de Jong, of Utrecht, kept in touch with our proceedings. He sent us copies of his pastoral letter to Dutch Catholics, explaining why they had to stand "aloof," but calling them to pray for the members and leaders of the assembly, that they might find the true unity that "has been brought into the world by Jesus Christ our Lord."

had to take active responsibility under God for improving social conditions. Barth himself was an active participant at Amsterdam, instead of sitting on an Alp in solitary majesty as he had done hitherto. In the debates of the sections and committees he showed an unexpectedly irenic disposition, fraternizing with Anglicans and Orthodox and seeking with them for the true common basis of Christian unity.

Partly as a result of Barth's work the report of Section I, on "The Universal Church in God's Design," was strikingly affirmative. Both on the *nature* of the Church and on its *mission* the members of the section found themselves in deep agreement, divided mainly by divergent emphases arising *within* their agreement. At one point only they discovered fundamental difference: between the "Catholic" view, which stresses the "visible continuity" of the Church through apostolic succession, and the "Protestant" view, which stresses the constant renewal of the Church through fresh contact with the Word of God. Douglas Horton protested against the definition of "Protestant," as not fully covering the case of the Free Churches, while the bishop of London objected that it is possible to be *both* "Catholic" and "Protestant" at once; but with some revision of terms, the distinction was kept as a guide to future study. Both in this discussion, and in all the work of the assembly, there was no disposition to minimize real differences; but it was concluded after full and candid examination that the Christian churches are actually one in Christ, and may become steadily more united if they continue to think out and work out together the implications of this basic unity. It was no wave of emotion, but solid and sober consideration, which led to this heartening conclusion. Never was a conference less prone to exaggeration, more cautiously judicial in its findings. The years will abundantly confirm the genuineness of the unity discovered, proclaimed, and demonstrated at Amsterdam. If others do not see it that is because they have chosen to stand outside the process of give and take which makes such vision possible.

In view of the actual unity demonstrated at Amsterdam it was all the more tantalizing not to be able to have one united Communion service. Four separate ones were held. Barth said it would have been better to have had none! One of them, according to the ritual of the Dutch Reformed Church, was supposed to be open to all; but the printed order of worship contained a passage "fencing the Table" against those who "invoke deceased saints," and classifying such persons with sorcerers

and adulterers—which must have offended the Eastern Orthodox. How long will it be before such rocks of offense are removed?

## II. A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

The primary purpose of the Amsterdam assembly was of course to get the World Council of Churches officially set up after its ten long years of merely "provisional" existence. A considerable amount of time had therefore to be given to the prosaic but highly important business of establishing a constitution and a set of rules, indicating lines of policy, and approving plans for administration and finance.

On Monday morning, August 23, the first working day, with the Archbishop of Canterbury in the chair, Pastor Marc Boegner presented a resolution opening with the following momentous words: "That the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches be declared to be and is hereby constituted, in accordance with the constitution drafted at Utrecht in 1938 and approved by the churches." There was a tense moment when an Anglican delegate went to the rostrum and moved that the reference to the Utrecht constitution be deleted; but when the Archbishop explained that the constitution provided fully for its own amendment, no second was heard, and a moment later the Boegner resolution passed without a single dissenting vote. After a round of applause the Archbishop asked all to stand for a moment of silent worship, after which he prayed: "As thou hast prospered those into whose labours we enter, so, we pray thee, prosper us in this our undertaking."

The provisional committee being then discharged—with thanks and applause for its services—Dr. Visser't Hooft made an important statement concerning the future policies of the newborn council. As a new type of organization, unique in church history, the council is exposed to many misunderstandings. To the member churches he wished to make clear that the council was not a superchurch nor a centralized administrative authority capable of controlling its members, but an organ of *conversation* between churches, and of *common witness* toward the world. To the Moscow Orthodox he said he hoped we could prove by our deeds that they were misinformed about our political partisanship; we served a Lord whose will *cuts across all political authorities*. To the Vatican he expressed regret that Catholic observers had not been sent, and gave his assurance that the council *was not designed to join in any struggle for ecclesiastical power*. To critics of the Utrecht basis of membership in

the council—acceptance of Christ as “God and Saviour”—he expressed his conviction that the basis must remain Christ-centered, and the affirmation of Christ’s deity must not be weakened; but the present formula might call for “clarification and amplification.” Internally, he said, the council must maintain a wise balance between the various functions it performs, between confessional and geographical representation, between official church delegates and unofficial consultants possessed of gifts of prophetic discernment; and it must make ample room for the younger churches, for laymen, and for women. Externally it must cultivate friendly relations with all other ecumenical organizations, especially with the International Missionary Council, with which it is now “in association” of the closest order compatible with necessary differences in structure.

This policy statement by the general secretary proved to be an accurate forecast of the lines taken by the three committees which labored on organizational problems.

The first of these committees approved the Utrecht constitution with some necessary amendments, and drafted a set of rules to implement it. The much-discussed “basis” was declared “adequate for the present purposes,” but changes in its wording might be proposed, so long as they kept “within the Christological principle.” Six existing functions of the council were approved, and evangelism was added as a seventh. The government of the council was entrusted to the assembly, a central committee of ninety, and six presidents, all the provisional presidents being re-elected except John R. Mott, who became honorary president, and was succeeded by Bishop Oxnam, while T. C. Chao of Yenching was added to the list, to represent the younger churches.

The second committee, on policy, referred most questions to the new central committee for formal decision, but made it possible for churches dissatisfied with the central committee’s ruling on membership questions to appeal to the assembly. It fixed the number of seats for the next assembly at five hundred, and it approved a new department of press and publicity, a new secretary for evangelism, and a new commission on the place of women in the church. It revised the Buck Hill Falls statement on the nature of the World Council, including the strong phrase “the Council disavows any thought of becoming a single unified church-structure dominated by a centralized administrative authority.” During the debate on this, in plenary session, Archbishop Fisher, of Canterbury, attempted to strengthen this self-denying ordinance, so as

to rule out the possibility that the council might ever become a church-structure of any kind, a logical step from the Anglican point of view, but disconcerting to Congregationalists, for whom the council *already is a church-structure, exactly parallel to their associations, conferences, and national councils (or unions) of autonomous congregations.*

The third committee, dealing with the details of organization and budget, recommended that the work of the council be decentralized as far as possible, each member church carrying a share of the responsibility. It proposed that the central committee meet every year, and have executive committee meetings every four or six months, to ensure the proper clearing of necessary decisions; that an administrative officer should be added to the Geneva staff to relieve the general secretary of detailed administration; and that the salaries and titles of the staff be reviewed by the central committee, "with a view to greater equity and uniformity." It approved an expanded budget of \$539,660, to be raised principally in the United States; but "in 1950, or as soon thereafter as possible, . . . the contributions which may reasonably be expected from the churches outside the United States shall constitute not less than one fourth of the whole"—an amazing commentary on the world's present economic plight, and our country's dangerously dominant position!

Needless to say, Americans will be in need of great tact, so long as this unnatural situation lasts, if they are not to be accused of trying to run the World Council. "He that pays the piper calls the tune"—but it shall not be so among you, says our Lord! Americans sometimes express the fear that the World Council is going to be dominated by European state churches; we had better be aware that Europeans look upon our complete financial dominance with a mixture of gratitude, fear, and half-stifled humiliation. While this goes on it is important that the American churches have well-qualified interpreters in Geneva, not to spy upon those who are spending "our money," but to maintain fully Christian relations with our fellow workers.

### III. A HOPEFUL WORD FOR A DISORDERED WORLD

Important and necessary as it was to transact our own business at Amsterdam, and enjoy Christian fellowship with one another, it was clear from the start that we should be morally inexcusable if we adjourned without frankly facing the present state of the world, and seeking for a word of hope and counsel that might speak to its condition. It was

for this world that Christ died. The least that could be expected of a world Assembly of Christ's followers was that they should take the world's distress to heart and ask God to show them what to do about it.

It was with a view to meeting this solemn obligation that the study department began in 1946 to work with scholars and experts all over the world upon a theme that related the world's problem to the only One able to solve it: "Man's Disorder and God's Design." Four commissions produced four volumes of essays on four aspects of this theme in time for the four "sections" of the assembly to read them and base their further deliberations upon them. Eleven speeches on this theme, beginning with Barth's keynote speech, were delivered from the rostrum before the sections got down to work on August 25. Others were delivered at public mass meetings every few evenings. Parallel with the debates of the four sections were the debates of the alternates, the youth delegates, and the subcommittees on special "concerns of the churches," all largely dealing with the world's disorder, and the Church's response to it. All these deliberative bodies produced reports and a special committee produced a general message aiming to give the upshot of the whole discussion.

The message unfortunately gives but an inkling of the richness and vigor of the discussion on which it was based. Influenced perhaps by Barth's dramatic warning—that only God can save the world; and the Church should not talk as though *she* could save it by some "Christian Marshall Plan"—the authors of the message have leaned so far to the side of modesty and understatement that they have produced what they admit will be a disappointing document, containing no news for the press and no immediate encouragement for the world. "This is God's world and he will save it somehow," they say in effect; "perhaps if we are faithful to the tasks that lie to our hands, we can set up signs that will indicate that this is so." Churches may find some real help in this message, but the general public, which bombarded the assembly with all sorts of petitions and expressions of hope, will probably feel that it asked for bread and got a stone.

But *the message is not Amsterdam*. Whoever finds it disappointing should look behind it to its sources. Let him read the four preparatory volumes if he can find the time; at any rate, the preparatory speeches, climaxed by the great East-West debate between John Foster Dulles and Professor Hromadka. Then let him study the reports and

resolutions of the four sections and four subcommittees, and the independent findings of the youth delegation.

What will he find? *Not* a completely coherent theory and program of Christian action in the present world situation; that would be unreasonable to expect of a meeting so short and so busy, dealing at high pressure with such immense problems. But if he will make his own synthesis he will find here (1) a comprehensive, realistic diagnosis of the world's present disorder; (2) a general prescription for the disorder, based upon God's revealed design but far more specifically related to precisely *this* state of affairs than the facile generalizations one gets from most Christian preachers; (3) a plan of Christian action beginning with a deep inward renewal of our badly disordered churches, but aiming to bring them into closer contact with our sick society so as to bring Christ's saving help to bear upon its actual needs and problems.

It is hard to state this diagnosis, prescription, and plan of action in a few words, but let me try. Modern society suffers from the general propensity of man to try to organize his life without reference to his Maker, but more specifically from the depersonalizing effects of technical skill released from moral control. Neither laissez-faire capitalism nor totalitarian communism can cure this disease. One exalts freedom and expects justice to follow automatically; the other seeks justice by means that destroy freedom; both tend to depersonalize man, and make him a mere pawn in a struggle for power. The Christian Church would be disloyal to its Lord if it identified itself with either of these tendencies, or became a blind partisan of either East or West in present-day power politics. Whatever may have been true previously, there is now no such thing as a "just war." The Church must give its support to all agencies tending to remove occasions for open war and permitting rival systems to coexist, thus giving time to work for a creative solution. The Church cannot find the needed solution in some "Christian" political party or some "Christian" economic panacea; it must judge all partisan programs, and every aspect of our common life, in the light of God's great design revealed in Christ. Above all, it must *live out* this design persuasively in its own fellowship, so as to furnish a pattern for the needed new society.

All this demands a great revival of the Church, a genuine "reformation in head and members." The modern Church is too entangled with modern society, too inwardly divided, too segregated into an unworldly

clergy and a worldly laity, to exert much influence for good or win much of a following. The ultimate basis for Christian social action and Christian evangelism is the same: let the Church first recover true New Testament community within its own fellowship, let it make clear the implications of this way of living for all its lay members in their daily callings, and it will begin to draw men to itself and re-create the body politic. This is a slow process. It will not soon stop the "cold war" between East and West. This fact should make Christians modest in their claims, which, perhaps after all, is sufficient justification for the extraordinary modesty of the Amsterdam message. But it needs to be said, *so that the world as well as the Church can hear it*, that the hopeful potentialities of a genuine renewal of the Church are already being manifested in concrete ways—relief and reconstruction, work camps for Christian youth, laymen's movements, revivals of Bible study, retreats and communities, rebuilding of dead congregations into living fellowships. *By the instrumentality of a Church thus revitalized God can save lost nations, lost generations, lost civilizations, as badly off as ours. He has done it before.*

When the future historian comes to define the unique contribution of Amsterdam, as compared with that of other great ecumenical gatherings, he may single out the fact that at Amsterdam the *renewal* of the Church was for the first time treated as a primary objective of the ecumenical movement, co-ordinate with and even above the *unity* of the Church. This new emphasis emerged as a strong prophetic conviction at the Buck Hill Falls meeting of the provisional committee in April, 1947. It is echoed and re-echoed in the four preparatory volumes. It came up spontaneously, again and again, in the speeches and debates at the assembly and in the concluding reports. Whatever else the message lacks it does not lack *this* note. Here, if anywhere, we may see God's Holy Spirit manifestly at work in this great assembly, calling for a new instrument through which to work: a Church not only healed of her divisions, but infused with new life, new hope, a new and infectious sense of "God with us," defying and dissipating the world's despair.

## Some Skills to Re-Mind Us

ALLAN A. HUNTER

THE FOURTEENTH-CENTURY anonymous book, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, commends the "better way" of Mary. Sitting at the feet of her Lord, "she did not heed the busyness of her sister . . . neither did she heed the preciousness of his body, nor the gentle voice, nor words that he spoke in her presence. . . . All her desire was centered on the highest Truth of God hidden within him—that is the Presence of God himself within him. To this she attended with all the love of her heart." But this classic on the contemplative way also speaks of Martha's busyness as "very good and righteous." We are today nearly all of us Marthas. Only we are less good and righteous and more obsessed with keeping the toast from being burnt. Some of us have not so much as heard whether there be such a thing as contemplation. We are active, with a vengeance. We cannot, therefore, be too often "re-minded," within our crowded schedules, of our relationship with total significance.

There used to be training centers where one of the brothers had a special task. Going the rounds of the library, orchard or stable, he would put his hand upon each one's shoulder wherever he might be and arouse him from preoccupation with this simple admonition, "Why are you doing this? Don't forget God."

Lacking such an official to do it for us, we have to take vigorous steps to re-mind ourselves. The contemplative needs no tactile, auditory, or visual aids. We do. These aids, after a time, *can* become perfunctory and mechanical like a Tibetan prayer wheel that you whirl in your hand while your mind may be anywhere but in heaven. Rigidity can overtake anybody at any time. But that is no excuse for being too lazy to use certain available skills. When it is our second nature to think of God as present but beyond all form, *then* the little devices can be dropped.

Through the centuries people have been helped, at any rate in their initial stages, by fingering beads. The touch of precious stones in his pocket used to refresh the spirit of a famous divine in the last century who did much to free the slaves. A contemporary champion of civil liberties (also

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a preacher), while standing up to excited opponents, likes to clasp his hands behind his back lest he forget the sense of fellowship which the kingdom of heaven implies. One suspects that Schweitzer, while making the rounds of his hospital in equatorial Africa, now and again floods his mind with a few remembered chords of Bach. For thousands, a phonograph record of Schweitzer playing Bach on some great organ brings the world of spirit suddenly near. Recollection through the eyes is not to be neglected. At four o'clock every morning the statesman-seer, Gandhi, regularly renewed his inner life with his favorite scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita or "Song of God," and often he had someone recite the Moslem Koran and words from the New Testament. Gandhi was a Hindu and was never baptized. All the same, so Louis Fischer reports, to help him be God-conscious twenty-four hours a day, he kept in his bare room a single visible challenge: a small, unpretentious picture of Jesus.

Humor, we know, can be invaluable as a skill to bring our ridiculous selves suddenly into relation with what is more important. Consider Gandhi once again. When an oversolemn visitor asked this humblest of men if he was a reincarnation of God, he burst out laughing. To him self-importance was a toy balloon and it was good fun poking a pin through it, especially if the inflated object had the Mahatma's name on it. Muriel Lester, who was always impressed with this gift of Gandhi, often herself opens a secret door, when a situation is becoming too stuffy, to let the sanity of laughter come unexpectedly in. She has trained herself never to be "grim on God's errands gay." There is in my community an eighty-one-year-old man in whom Christ is seen to live again. Nearly every day since he was twenty-five he has read something from the *Imitation of Christ* along with words of Jesus or Saint Paul. His neighbors rejoice in the ease with which he habitually breathes, recalls, and practices the presence of God as revealed in his Master. Labor trusts him. So does the church. This insight he offers is apt: "There are times when humor is God's greatest gift to man."

When a sense of the incongruous flashes through him, it is to bind people to life and to one another. It may seem to be evanescent. Often the transformation of attitude lasts. There is nothing he loves better than to chair a meeting where overheated "causists" have to be kept from jumping at each other's throats. He is in no hurry. The exact moment, he knows, will come. When it does, with perfect timing and an anticipatory chuckle that bubbles up from his center he tells how once when he was a boy. . . . There is an irresistible detonation. The tension, the fever is gone. Every-

body is friendly again. He is wise enough not to go on telling jokes. If he did, he might be seeking the spotlight for himself. This kind of release is not an orthodox form of vocal prayer. Nevertheless it can refocus attention in a creative way. George Washington Carver's spontaneous ripple of ironic delight had the same disarming power. A reporter once patronizingly referred to him as a toothless old man. "I am *not* toothless," smiled the great scientist, who was also a saint without a halo, "I had my teeth right here in my pocket all through the interview."

What the old Quaker, Rendell Harris, used to say should often be recalled by aspirants to the spiritual life; a sense of humor breaks into blossom when we have overcome the world. He could have added: it sometimes saves us from being overcome by the world. We cannot with our surface wills say, "Go to, now, I will make people laugh," and succeed. They may only groan and wish they were somewhere else—fast. But we can train ourselves to be less tense and more relaxed, less preoccupied with our own silliness and more aware of the glory above and within all life.

Here are some skills in this general direction. They have been tried and found useful. Each person, after making a habit of one or two, may find himself inventing better re-minders.

You are working. The phone rings. It doesn't have to make you swear. The interruption gives one more chance to listen to what a human being, not a gramophone record, poignantly wants to know. At the other end of the wire he will request this or that. What he really wants, and maybe you can catch it in the overtones, is an answer, a positive answer, to the question that can be overheard in nearly every human voice: "Does anybody *care*?"

There is frustration. Some other human will collide with yours. The facts may as well be faced: she is going to marry someone else; a member of the family has lost his job, so you'll have to quit school; it isn't hives, it's shingles! These catastrophes are not the end of the world. They can be opportunities to try out the philosophy that all things happening, if given the right twist or orientation, will work together so that growth instead of disintegration takes place.

If you are driving through heavy traffic on the way home, this can be repeated, not mechanically but with some sense of the meaning: "I need you all the time." That is what an ex-opium addict, now a medical student, used to say behind the wheel during his convalescent days.

While walking, this rhythm sentence makes the step more lively and the backbone straighter: "Thy (left foot) will (right foot) be—done—

right here—right—now.” As you swim: “Sing with thy every stroke the praise of God,” or as the Sanscrit has it, “Sing with thy every breath.” As you run, “Thankyou, thankyou.”

Before eating: “May this food become energy to put more drive into sending food to Europe and Asia.” The lips need not be moved. The will can be.

Before dropping off to sleep: you can review the day’s mistakes and defiance, and then turn the whole mess over to the only One who is able to cart the garbage away. The day can be ended, if the custom of a very wise friend is followed, by fixing in mind something like this: “I drop myself into your keeping. If I wake in the body, fine; if not, all right. For these next few hours of sleep, you, not I, are responsible.”

When the alarm goes off we can be grateful for the new chance this instant recognized. (The line of least resistance is to think, instead, of the injustice we suffer at having to get up and how heroic we will be *later*, when we leap out of bed to greet the winter dawn.) One man, so that he can get out of bed on the right side, first glances at his Testament. Another sometimes joins his thanksgiving with that of the house finch soaring over the lawn. The author of *The Devout Life* recommends calling to mind that the day now at hand is “given you in order that you may work for Eternity, and make a steadfast resolution to use this day for that end.”

Whether in the morning or at noon or before supper or sleep, there is a skill that needs special emphasis. It is the practice of holding by name certain human beings in the light. The purpose is not to beg or demand what we think is good for them (“If she tried that on me I would murder her!”). It is simply to hold them in the presence of what is infinitely better than our best. If certain people are not thus on our hearts they will soon or late be on our nerves. Maybe they will be, anyway; but if so, something creative is more likely to happen if the discord is committed to God. Kirby Page urges us to put some secret time on Russia’s rulers and other agents of power politics, including our own. We should ask that God’s will be done in them. When I try this with Stalin I get bored within thirty seconds. But could that not be a symptom of something away back there in the tunnel menagerie that has to be explored?

We are to will the best, not ours but God’s, for individuals we personally know: the friend who is letting the image of suicide hypnotize him (if nothing is quickly done to connect him with a reason for living) into what may be an irrevocable act; the spiritual giant around the corner, who, as we thank God for having him as neighbor, encourages us even in that instant

to grow a little taller, "toward the crown Christ has placed above our heads and we are seeking all our lives to reach."

Such concern for others would be justified if all it did were to force us in humility to be purified and less unfit so that we could have a vital relationship with those for whom we pray. But the effect is not on ourselves alone, beneficial as that effect certainly would be. Regenerating force goes out toward other wills, at a level deeper than ordinary speech. Let us not be too sure that just because Rhine's experiments at Duke University regarding telepathy are ridiculed by the prof in "Psych 203," there is nothing there. A thing can be read without being easily measured or chalked up on the blackboard as Q.E.D. The danger may be that we try to exploit this extrasensory power for our own egotistical ends, manipulating other wills by our own. It may be harmful to pray for somebody else unless our desires and telepathic powers are first filtered through the love of God.

There is a third pressure, beyond either the subjective or the telepathic, that prayer for others exerts. It is something more universal than our separate human desires, something more pervasive than extrasensory perception. A student perceived this when, quoting from "The Hound of Heaven," "All things betray thee who betrayest me," he adds: "Yes, and if I betray thee I betray all things. But if in place of treason I give allegiance, what then?" We had better not be too romantic as to what happens then. But on this we can rely. If we vote through prayer for the cohesive power of the universe and think of it as in relation to the person about whom we are concerned, in some inexplicable total way that vote counts. If every atom is so intimately related to every other that a lift of the finger in some infinitesimal way affects even the moon, why close our minds to the possibilities of deep desire that includes the welfare of others?

This work may be subtler and more effective than we guess. It is for the street as well as the sanctuary. Perhaps we are meant to toss it off with the abandonment of the meadow lark. From his telephone wire he flings at preoccupied motorists one more piercing bugle summons, one more marvelous chance to answer life in all its lovely instancy. The traffic does not pause to listen? No matter. He offers another affirmation anyway. If you in the car, as a result, look out upon the world with less defiance and more fellow feeling, he will never know it.

What gets across is not the point. The point is that something mysteriously potent occurs when one deep will addresses another, first referring the whole situation to God. That which most lastingly helps is least self-consciously done.

Have you ever had this experience on a street car or a bus? There, hanging onto a strap or jostled about while trying to stand, is a man whose ancestors your ancestors compelled to come to this country in chains. Because of pigmentation, over which he has no control, he is shut out from the kind of work you take for granted and through which you live relatively well. Since men speak least when they suffer most, he will never let you know what it personally means to be zoned out of a house suitable for his wife and children. He will never mention how it feels, when visiting relatives in another state he knows, that any day he may be lynched. However bright the sky, there are pinpricks if not insults from Washington to Florida. There he is, silhouetted in a new light. It will not bring you to your knees but it may make you sense with unexpected contrition the part you have played, all unaware, in keeping his ceiling down. But that is not all. Here is a fellow citizen valuable in his own right. The more you see his special quality, the more you are overwhelmed with the sense of being one with him. In a sense you *are* that man; you know it in your bones.

Or there, once again, leaving a government office downtown, is an Indian dressed as you dress, but with a different mien. He does not appreciate the white man's irony thrust home from some of our nickels. On one side is the face of a chief or brave. Right in front of the nose is the word "Liberty"—when he is not even allowed to be a citizen. On the other side of the nickle is a solitary buffalo with the legend above it, "Once there were many, now there's only one left." Too free a translation? Well, it is no freer than our breezy Caucasian way of helping ourselves to what was his.

We brag how, after landing on this continent, our forebears fell on their knees and then on the aborigines. The slaughter we cannot atone for. But it is not too late to be ashamed. Incidentally, we who have pallid faces are not in the majority. *We* are the minority group. Our brothers whose skin is better equipped to take the sun outnumber us three to one. It is beginning to be good politics to open our eyes and say we are sorry. But expediency speaks with a hollow voice. The real reason for contrition is this. We have done *wrong*, and we have done it not alone to them but to the Author of all skin differences, who would test us out to see if we really want to be one.

Call it anything you like, but it is very close to intercessory prayer when we sense how linked we are, by the same ball and chain, to the other man. But we can also be partners with him in the common effort to break free. Desire of this outgoing kind is more than a skill. It is energy of the spirit having the right of way through the human will.

Seeing others whole so that they tend to become whole—loving people in the terrifying love of God—is a practice that need not be limited to special protracted periods of devotion, or to the superathletes. At least once a day we can do this to a human being. As he approaches or as we look at him sitting near us or walking or chatting away, we can remind ourselves that life is a trust-intelligence test, a chance to be less immature, and here it is in all its poignancy. Then not with spoken words but with an exercise of the imagination, we can “frame” him thus:

“Above you is the Will that wills the best for us all. The top stick of the frame through which you are being observed is the infinite Caring that never gets discouraged no matter what you do. Nothing that happens can change that Will. It is good, even though this moment it may seem to you bad.

“The perpendicular stick to the right represents its power, totally different from our power. Our urge for omnipotence acts impatiently, wildly, because it is limited to minutes and pressed for time. This power that cherishes personality never watches the clock. It has eternity. It is not frustrated by our defiances. Suppose an hour from now the brief streak of lightning composing your body were transmitted into some other form of energy. You would not stop. The meaning, like a Chinese poem, would keep going on. The Educator would still have you, his pupil, safely in his hands. Spirit is so real that it can afford to lend you an infinitesimal bit of its power.

“The bottom horizontal stick is part of the human response. It is the darkness in your will and mine. The capacity to sin. You are not a push button even for unlimited eternal love to force. The decision is still yours. You are a person. That means you can make bad choices that lead to worse ones and the resulting degeneration. Right now you may be allowing your ego to bully you into anxiety, bitterness, self-pity, or the desire to exploit and rule others. The freedom to be confused and cruel will continue to be yours for quite a while. Possibly, but not probably, forever. That is no cause for despair. It implies something else:

“The left-hand vertical stick! You have also the capacity to make a creative instead of a deadening choice. The will in you that has been saying ‘No’ can turn at this moment to say ‘Yes,’ however feebly, to what is more alive and real. You might even now begin to point toward that which is above you, instead of down toward that which only delays your conscious experience of the will that can make life new. Behold the most exciting thing there is: the power in you to become a different kind of man.

That potentiality could be stirred into action in both of us! • The present mysterious split second of evolution does not need to mean one more foolish step toward stagnation. For either or both of us two human beings, it could bring the most momentous contact we have yet had with the Eternal Now."

Facing each other, we are helplessly inarticulate. The only One who is not relies little, it seems, on our clumsy means of attempting communication. Human love ultimately is mute. It is "the sustained activity of the will in behalf of others," the sustained activity of the will, not the tongue. This effort behind the scenes to hold people in the light has rightly been called the world's greatest secret service.

Our skills for turning the will, heart, and mind toward the infinite compassion, beauty, and wisdom, not for ourselves alone but for the sake of all life, can be polished with use. The devices will never be adequate to the aim. The aim is to bring our whole nature into partnership with God's. Our little techniques—this has to be underscored—are but toys which we, being children, have to take seriously for a while but not too long. Eventually, because we are meant to grow, they will have to be exchanged for less childish tools. To drive home this fact, a saint of another age tells how he watched a youngster on the beach running back and forth, emptying something into a hole in the sand.

"What are you doing with the pretty sea shell?" he asked.

The child waved toward the ocean. "I'm trying to put that," he said, "into this." And he pointed at a small depression he had dug in the sand.

Through these skills we have been considering there can be poured into our life on earth only a few shellfuls of the illimitable significance that forever confronts us.

# Job and Psalms in the Vulgate

ARTHUR WENTWORTH HEWITT

LET US UNDERSTAND our game, *O Theophili omnes*, who have read the former treatise, and any reader whom the Lord may raise up for this article. Between me and the *biblical scholar* (*crescendo*) a great gulf is fixed. Compared with Moffatt or Craig my ignorance is sublime. Reared on a Green Mountain farm, I have dug more among the roots of vegetables than of verbs. But every lover of God reads his Bible; and not only unto edification, but for sheer delight in the ancient text, I have been reading the Vulgate and noting, as I go, those things which most impress me, particularly variations. Whether they are the things which *should* impress me or be noted, let him that is educated among you first cast an opinion.

I cite this to explain why my commentary may seem disproportionate, as well as inadequate. There is too much personal equation in it. For example, I never was sufficiently impressed with that conceited upstart Elihu, so I have followed the excellent example of Job and of Jehovah who so beautifully and utterly ignore his intrusion. Besides, he does not manifest the originality Adam Clarke attributes to him, and no notable variations appear in the Latin such as we wish to point out. If, therefore, knowing 'how little I pretend, you want to read with me, *in cathedra sede; si non, bene est*, but don't slam the door as you go!

The first two chapters of Job are in prose, the *Prologus Historicus*. This is the stage setting for the sublime interchange of dramatic poetry which begins with Job's break in the long silence, at the opening of Ch. III: "*Pereat dies in qua natus sum!*" (Perish the day in which I was born!) Thence until XLII:7 the poetry continues, when it is followed by the *Epilogus Historicus* also in prose. Two things in these prose passages challenged my attention when I read them first. In the days of Job's restored prosperity, new daughters of great beauty blessed him and he named them: (A. V.) Jemima (Heb., Days upon days), Kezia (Heb., Cassia), and Kerenhappuch (Horn of plenty) (XLII:14). In the Latin Epilogue their names are Diem (acc. of *Dies*, Day), Cassia (a well-known aromatic plant), and *Cornus*, or in the case ending as in the text *Cornu stibii* (Horn of antimony).

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The formal difference is great, but the above interpretation shows a difference only in the last name, which in the Vulgate refers not to the flowing plenty but to the material of the horn.

In the Prologue there is a difference flatly contradictory in form. Probably the Latin is to be understood as the acme of irony. Satan tells God (A. V. 1:11) "He will curse thee to thy face," but the Vulgate verb is *benedixerit*, he will *bless* thee. So, also, Mrs. Job does not say in II:9, "Curse God and die," but "*Benedic Deo, et morere.*"

The sublimity of this poem prevents one from too minute criticism, but a few comparisons signal for attention. In A. V. 6:2 Job cries out, "Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!" There is added meaning in

*Utinam appenderentur peccata mea quibus iram merui,  
Et calamitas quam patior, in statera!*

(Oh that my sins for which I have merited wrath,  
And the calamity which I suffer were weighed in the balances!)

And in verse 6 the Vulgate has no reference to the "white of an egg." "*Aut potest aliquis gustare quod gustatum affert mortem?*" (Or can anyone taste that of which the taste is dead?—to translate freely.)

Both versions, while differing, are poetic in VII:4, 5: "When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day. My flesh is clothed with worms . . . ." Compare

*Si dormiero, dicam: Quando consurgam?*

*Et rursum expectabo vesperam,*

*Et replebor doloribus usque ad tenebras.*

*Induta est caro mea putredine.*

(If I sleep, I will say: When shall I rise?

And again I will await the evening,

And I am full of sorrows till the darkness.

My flesh is clothed in rottenness.)

In IX:26 "They are passed away as the swift ships." But the Vulgate prefers the freight to the speed of the A. V. "*Pertransierunt quasi naves poma portantes.*" (They have passed away like ships carrying fruits.) Note the threefold alliteration in the Latin like that of English versification before Chaucer.

In X:20 Job asks to be let alone, "that I may take comfort a little." The Latin line which this replaces is plangent and beautiful: "*ut plangam paululum dolorem meum*" (that I may lament a little my grief). Ch. X ends with an A. V. reference to the land where "the light is as darkness."

What a faded picture of the "*terram . . . ubi . . . sempiternus horror inhabitat*" (the land where eternal horror is at home)!

The great declaration in XIII:15, "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him," loses a little in form but not in meaning as the Vulgate has it: "*Etiā si occiderit me, in ipso sperabo.*" (Even if he shall kill me, in himself will I hope.)

Job applies to the tree in XIV:9 a human metaphor. Instead of bringing forth "boughs" it grows *comam* (hair). Job's question (XIV:14), "If a man die, shall he live again?" is more effective in the Vulgate: "*Putasne, mortuus homo rursum vivat?*" (Think you a dead man lives again?) Also "Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands" (v. 15), becomes more than a desire in "*operi manuum tuarum porriges dexteram.*" (To the work of thy hands thou wilt reach out thy right hand.) And "*parce peccatis meis*" (spare, perhaps *forbear*, my sins) is in place of "dost thou not watch over my sin?" (v. 16). Instead of "thou sewest up mine iniquity" (v. 17) is "*sed curasti iniquitatem meam*" (but thou hast care for my iniquity).

Read XVII:1-3 in the A. V.

My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me.  
Are there now mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?  
Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me?

But the Vulgate differs:

*Spiritus meus attenuabitur,  
dies mei breviabuntur,  
et solum mihi superest sepulcrum.  
Non peccavi,  
et in amaritudinibus moratur oculus meus.  
Libera me, Domine, et pone me iuxta te,  
et cuiusvis manus pugnet contra me.*  
(My breath will be weakened,  
My days will be shortened  
And the tomb alone is left to me.  
I have not sinned,  
and in bitterness my eyes have lingered.  
Set me free, Lord, and put me close to thee,  
and—with the force of *even*—whosoever's hand shall fight against me.)

In XVII:11 we read, "My purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart," and in Latin: "*Cogitationes meae dissipatae sunt, torquentes cor meum.*" (My purposes are scattered, twisting my heart)—a vivid metaphor of heartache.

"The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him" (XXI:33) becomes

in the Vulgate another classic mythological reference: "*Dulcis fuit glareis Cocytii.*" (It was sweet on the sands of Cocytus—i.e., the mythical river of the underworld.)

With little alteration of meaning the Vulgate begins Ch. XXVI with a more terse putting of some of the questions. For example, compare: "How hast thou helped him that is without power?"—"Cuius adiutor es?" (Whose helper are you?) But in v. 13 the Vulgate is interesting:

*Spiritus eius ornavit caelos  
et obstetricante manu eius, eductus est coluber tortuosus.*  
(His spirit adorned the heavens,  
and by his obstetric hand the writhing serpent was drawn out.)

Anthropomorphism with a vigor!

In Ch. XXXI:35, just before Job wishes that his adversary (Vulgate: *ipse qui iudicat*—he who judges) had written a book, he desires in the A. V. "that the Almighty would answer" him. But the Vulgate verb is *audiat*, that he would *hear* him.

Ch. XXXIX of the Vulgate ends with verse 5 of A. V. Ch. XL. This makes the verse numbers differ in the two versions. In 40:4 of A. V. we read, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee?" This is (XXXIX:34): "*Qui leviter locutus sum, respondere quid possum?*" (I who lightly have spoken, what am I able to answer?) It is said of the eagle in XXXIX:30 (A. V.), "where the slain are, there is she." Compare "*et ubicumque cadaver fuerit, statim adest.*" (And wherever the carcass will be, at once she is there.)

The picture of the war horse in XXXIX is very similar in the two versions, but the Latin verse is so lyric and magnificent that we wish we had space to transcribe it.

How tiny this taste of the inexhaustible fountain of the Book of Job! Let us close it by going back to chapter XIX. Open your English Bible at verse 21 and read that piteous appeal of Job to his friends. There will never be language better than the heartbreaking eloquence of it in the Authorized Version. Read on till you come to that great music, "For I know that my Redeemer liveth." But behold now in the Vulgate just after those words a great difference of meaning, a text far more expressive of the personal resurrection of man. With your King James volume still open, compare:

*Scio enim quod Redemptor meus vivit,  
(For I know that my Redeemer lives,)  
et in novissimo die de terra surrecturus sum;  
(and in the last day I shall rise up out of the earth;)  
Et rursum circumdabor pelle mea.  
(And again I shall be covered by my skin.)*

*Et in carne mea videbo Deum meum.*  
 (And in my flesh I shall see my God.)  
*Quem visurus sum ego ipse,*  
 (Whom I myself shall see,)  
*et oculi mei conspecturi sunt, et non alius;*  
 (and my eyes shall gaze upon, and not another;)  
*reposita est haec spes mea in sinu meo.*  
 (this my hope is restored in my bosom.)

Here ends the sublime Easter anthem which rises out of leprous rottenness, sackcloth and ashes, in far more vivid assurance of personal resurrection than any of the English versions carry. When I read it in the Vulgate I want to shout, *Alleluia! Spes gloriosa est in aeternitatem. Benedicamus Domino!*

Yet after this climax the chapter goes on for two verses (XIX:28-29), to be quoted for their variations:

But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?

Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment.

*Quare ergo nunc dicitis; Persequamur eum,*  
*et radicem verbi inveniamus contra eum?*  
*Fugite ergo a facie gladii*  
*quoniam ultor iniquitatum gladius est;*  
*et scitote esse judicium.*

(Why therefore do you now say: Let us persecute him, and let us find out the root of a word against him?)

Flee therefore from the face of the sword, because the avenger of injustices is the sword; and you shall know that judgment is to be.)

In all my translations I have been literal at the cost of the literary, so as to leave interpretation (if any—so often *not!*) to the reader. I would rather you would trust than admire me. An example of what I mean is the line (above) beginning "*et radicem verbi.*" So as not to be misleading at all I have, of course, given it in bald literalness. Yet a better translation would be: "Let us dig up the very root of an accusation against him!" The word "very" is not in the original, yet to use it is the only way of expressing the full animus in the use of *radicem*. And *verbi* (gen.) is simply "word," but in this case it clearly means "accusation." The idea of digging is not normally in *inveniamus*, but it is put there by *radicem*, for digging is the way we "find" roots. But it is better for a translator to play safe. Steer carefully among synonyms. Among the meanings which the lexicon lists under *radix* is "radish." Yet you would think me no scholar if I should

translate, "Let us find a radish for him." Worse yet, *contra eum*. Translation is a ticklish task.

In the Psalms, as in Job, one is inclined not so much to note the text critically as to chant the ocean-rolling rhythm of the great poetry. Translations are like copies of great paintings, the lines are the same but there are little shades of difference in color, in spite of all effort at identical transcription. Two copies differ more from each other than either differs from the model. So, under essential sameness, we have little turns of difference.

In Psalm XIV (XIII Vulgate, through combination of IX and X), verse 1, A. V.: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." "*Dixit insipiens in corde suo: Non est Deus.*" He is not even a positive fool, *stultus*, he is a fool through deficiency, pure and simple: *in-sapiens*—not only "not all there" but not *any* there—insipid. Thus atheism is revealed as primarily a *mental* deficiency.

In this psalm, following verse 3, are eight lines not in A. V., though the first two lines are identical with two lines in Psalm V:11 (Vulgate).

*Sepulcrum patens est guttur eorum;  
linguis suis dolose agebant;  
venenum aspidum sub labiis eorum.  
Quorum os maledictione et amaritudine plenum est;  
veloces pedes eorum ad effundendum sanguinem.  
Contritio et infelicitas in viis eorum,  
et viam pacis non cognoverunt.  
non est timor Dei ante oculos eorum.  
(Their throat is an open sepulcher;  
with their tongues they have practiced deceit;  
the poison of asps is under their lips.  
Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness;  
their feet are swift to the shedding of blood.  
Contrition and misery are in their ways,  
And the way of peace they have not known.  
there is no fear of God before their eyes.)*

Why are these words so familiar, though not in the A. V. psalm? Because Paul quotes them in Romans III:13-18. One theory is that he put the passage together from various sources (see Ps. V:9, Ps. CXL:3, Ps. X:7; Isa. LIX:7, 8; Ps. XXXVI:1); but the better belief is that he quoted them from the Septuagint. They are not in the Hebrew text. And since Romans III:10-12 were found in Ps. XIV (XIII Vulgate), later transcribers of the Septuagint concluded that the verses 13-18 also belonged in the Psalm and put them there from Paul's text. The reason for the theory that the verses were assembled from various texts is that this passage is not found

in the Alexandrian MS. The most ancient copies of the LXX do not contain them. Interesting? Bow to Adam Clarke. No? Then go back to bed.

Little shades of difference in the same meaning? Begin reading Ps. XV in the A. V. and then note this:

*Domine, quis habitabit in tabernaculo tuo?*  
(Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle?)  
*aut quis requiescet in monte (not colle) sancto tuo?*  
(or who shall rest in thy holy mountain?)  
*Qui ingreditur sine macula.*  
(Whoso goes in without stain.)

In the next Psalm, XVI (XV), the A. V. has in verse 4, "Their sorrows shall be multiplied *that* hasten *after* another god." The supplied words show you that the translators had a hard time. This passage in the Vulgate stands as a sentence complete in itself—and no gods are in it. One suspects a prophecy of our times. "*Multiplicatae sunt infirmitates eorum, postea acceleraverunt.*" Yes, that is our 1948 word *accelerate*, and the literal translation is, "Their infirmities have been multiplied after they have speeded up."

Modern events put whimsicality in readings where it does not belong. Our English translators could not foresee what the automobile would do to the mental image of Judith, when they wrote that "she put a tire on her head." Now come days of rationing when butter is not, and you buy "oleo." Though a good substitute, it tends not to improve the devotional effect of reading in the Shepherd psalm, "*impinguasti in oleo caput meum*" (thou anointest my head with—oil). But much as I love the Vulgate, it is inferior by far in this Psalm XXII (our XXIII).

*Dominus regit me, et nihil mihi deerit;*  
*in loco pascuae ibi me collocavit.*  
(The Lord rules me, and nothing shall be lacking to me;  
in the place of grazing, there he has located me.)

*Eheu*, and whew! Let us return to the green pastures of the Shepherd as we knew them in childhood. For "still waters" the Vulgate has "*aquam refectionis*," the *water*—give us a little liberty! Let us say, the *river* of refreshment—but not even that can reconcile us. This is one of the many places in which the King James Version is far above the Vulgate.

In Psalm 29:2 (A. V.) we have "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." The Vulgate passage, "*Adorate Dominum in atrio sancto eius*" is "adore the Lord in his holy hall," *atrium* being the hall or principal room beyond the entrance of a Roman house. In verse 6, the "young unicorn" is "*Filius unicornium*" (son of the unicorns).

"*Revela Domino viam tuam et spera in eo, et ipse faciet*" (Unveil thy way to the Lord and hope in him, and himself will perform) is the version of our Psalm 37:5; and instead of "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him," we have "*Subditus esto Domino, et ora eum.*" (Be subject to the Lord and beseech him.)

Look now at Psalm 40 in A. V. (remembering this is XXXIX in the Vulgate). "I waited patiently for the Lord" is "*Expectans, expectavi Dominum*" (Waiting, I have awaited the Lord). And in verse 2 (3 of Vulgate) "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay" is "*Et eduxit me de lacu miseriae, et de luto faecis.*" (He brought me up out of the pool of misery and out of the mire of—well, one is not too sure how to translate *faecis* but its derivative is unpleasant.)

In Psalms 42:2 (it will be more convenient to make the references to A. V.; the difference is so slight that location in the Vulgate is easy) we read, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." This is "*Sitivit anima mea ad Deum fortem, vivum.*" (My soul thirsted for God, the strong, the living.) "As with a sword in my bones" (verse 10 A. V.) is "*Dum confringuntur ossa mea*" (while my bones are broken—literally "crushed together").

O for space to quote some of these jubilant songs in their full lyric Latin! (47:1) "O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph."

*Omnes gentes, plaudite manibus*  
(All nations, applaud with hands)  
*Jubilate Deo in voce exultationis.*

And again in 66:1 (A. V. ref.) "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands."

*Jubilate Deo, omnis terra;*  
*Psalmum dicite nomini eius;*  
*date gloriam laudi eius.*  
*Dicite Deo: Quam terribilia sunt opera tua, Domine!*

David's penitent cry that God will have mercy on him "according to thy lovingkindness" in 51:1 is "*secundum magnam misericordiam tuam*" (according to—or following—thy great compassion).

In Psalm 78:8 we read of "a stubborn and rebellious generation." The Vulgate phrases it "*Prava et exasperans*" (perverse and exasperating). And in verse 66 we have a clear case of spanking in which A. V. and Vulgate coincide, for "he smote his enemies in the hinder parts" is literal English for "*Et percussit inimicos suos in posteriora.*"

In Psalm XCI we are told not to fear "the destruction that wasteth at noonday," a text which George Morrison used for his sermon, "The

Perils of Middle Age." In the Vulgate this expression is "*et daemónio meridiano*" (the noonday devil).

In Psalm 103:2 we are told to "forget not all his benefits." In the Vulgate this is *retributiones*. And in 104:1 democracy breaks in; for instead of "thou art clothed with honor and majesty" the words are "*confessionem et decorem*" (confession—i.e., general acknowledgment—and honor). In 11 and 12 "the wild asses quench their thirst" and the "fowls of heaven" (such translation is a foul not of heaven) "sing among the branches." In the Vulgate we read "*expectabunt onagri in siti sua*" (the wild asses will wait in their thirst) and the birds, not fowls, but *volucres* (flying ones) "*de medio petrarum dabunt voces*" (from the midst of the rocks will give forth their voices—songs). In verse 17 "where the birds make their nests" is not much different from "*illic passerēs nidificabunt*," but what a perfect word for birds (*passeres*) and what a lovely verb for building a nest! In verse 21 "The young lions roar after their prey" is good, but listen: "*Catuli leonum rugientes ut rapiant*" (little cats—cubs—of the lions roaring as they rape). And in verse 34 it is not my "meditation of him shall be sweet," but "*Jucundum sit ei eloquium meum*." Let my eloquence be delightful—it is almost the Shakespearian "jocund"—to him!

Psalm 105:42 A. V. "Abraham his servant" is "*Abraham, puerum suum*"—his boy, a word sometimes used for servant instead of *servus* or *famulus*, but indicating a lad attending his father.

Psalm 106:14 "Lusted exceedingly in the wilderness" is "*Et concupierunt concupiscentiam in deserto*" (And they thoroughly lusted lust in the desert). Inadmissible English and ethics but expressive Latin. In verse 18, "And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked," the Latin for "company" is *synagoga*, the synagogue of the New Testament:

*Et exarsit ignis in synagoga eorum,  
flamma combussit peccatores.*

In verse 19 they *adoraverunt sculptile*, a graven, not a "molten image." Where the A. V. records (verse 28) that "they joined themselves also unto Baal-peor," the Latin makes this an initiation: "*Et initiati sunt Beelphegor*." When "the plague was stayed" after the vigorous act of Phineas (verse 30) we read, "*Et stetit Phinees, et placavit*." (And Phineas stood up and appeased—not "executed"—judgment.) "*Et cessavit quassatio*"—"and the shaking (Livy) ceased."

A difference from the A. V. is in Psalm 108:9: "Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph."

*Moab lebes spei meae;  
in Idumaeam extendam calceamentum meum;  
mihi alienigenae amici facti sunt.*

(Moab is the washpot of my hope;  
over Edom will I extend my shoe;  
those foreign—literally alien—races to me are made friends.)

In Psalm 109:3 where the A. V. says they "fought against me without a cause" the Vulgate has our identical slang use of the word "gratis," "*Expugnauerunt me gratis!*" This use occurs again in Vulgate CXIX:7. Where the A. V. (109:7) says "let him be condemned," the Vulgate has *exeat* (let him go out—i.e., from the court) *condemnatus*. The word used for office in verse 8, "Let another take his office," is *episcopatum*, as if Jerome pictured the great sinner of the Psalm as an ecclesiastic. In Acts 1:20 this passage is quoted as a prophecy of Judas losing his apostleship and being replaced. "His bishopric let another take," in King James; his "office" in Twentieth Century New Testament, Revised Standard, et al.; his "charge" in Moffatt; his "work" in Weymouth; his "ministry" in the (Catholic) Revision of the Challoner-Rheims Version, 1941. "Bishopric" is anachronistic even in the apostolic times, except on Wesley's doctrine that "bishop" and "elder" were the same. Jerome might have read *episcopatum* back into the Psalms from the Greek word in Acts 1:20, ἐπισκοπήν. But that is the identical word used in the Septuagint in Psalm 109:8. And my old friend, William D. Hassett, A.M., Litt.D., Secretary to the President, has just sent me, from the White House, a beautiful Bible in English, Imprimatur dated 1914, printed in Belgium, revised from Douai (1609) and Rheims (1582) in which the word "bishopric" is used both in Psalm 109:8 and in Acts 1:20. It is not, however, to be deduced that Judas was the first bishop or that a bishop is a sinner, i.e., on *Vulgate authority*.

The Latin verb in 109:23 is expressive: "*et excussus sum sicut locustae*"—in the A. V. "I am tossed up and down as the locust."

The beautiful words, "thou hast the dew of thy youth," are not in the Latin of Psalm 110:3, A. V. But the psalm begins with a rhythmic alliteration: "*Dixit Dominus Domino meo*" (The Lord said unto my Lord). The "good understanding" (Psalm 111:10) of those that do his commandments is "*intellectus bonus*." "A good man showeth favor, and lendeth" (Psalm 112:5) is "*Jucundus homo qui miseretur et commodat*" (the pleasant man who pities and accommodates).

In the A. V. several psalms from 113 onward end with "Praise ye the Lord." In the Latin these words are deferred to the following Psalm, which they open in one word, *Alleluia*. The Vulgate *Psalmus CXIII* is

composed of the A. V. Psalms 114 and 115. But CXIV and CXV in the Vulgate are one psalm in the A. V., so our numbering is still one point different.

"The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence" (A. V. 115:17). This last clause in the Vulgate is *neque omnes qui descendunt in infernum* (nor all who descend into "inferno"—strong translation, or "the lower regions"—weak tea). Probably Dantean damnation was not implied. "The sea saw it and fled" (Psalm 114:3, A. V.) is the poetic "*Mare vidit, et fugit.*"

In Psalm 119, verse 85, "The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law" is not recognizable in "*Narraverunt mihi iniqui fabulationes sed non ut lex tua.*" (The hostile have told me lies, but not as thy law.) In verse 140, "Thy word is very pure" is "*Ignitum eloquium tuum vehementer*" (Your eloquence is burning vehemently), which, of course, may have a suggestion of purification by fire. For "I am small and despised" in the next verse the words are apt: "*Adolescentulus sum ego et contemptus.*"

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills" (Psalm 121:1). No! "*Levavi oculos meos in montes*" (I have lifted my eyes to the mountains). In verse 6 "the sun shall not smite thee by day" is "*sol non uret te*" (the sun shall not burn thee); and in verse 8 "thy going out and thy coming in" is reversed: "*introitum tuum et exitum tuum.*" Another interesting reversal is in Psalm 124:4(b)-5 A.V., "The stream had gone over our soul: then the proud waters had gone over our soul."

*Torrentem pertransivit anima nostra;  
forsitan pertransivit anima nostra  
aquam intolerabilem.*

(Our soul has gone across the torrent;  
perchance our soul had gone across the  
intolerable water.)

Read the opening of Psalm 125 in the A. V. and note this variation in verse 1: "*Qui confidunt in Domino, sicut mons Sion: non commovebitur in aeternum, qui habitat in Jerusalem.*" (They who trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion; he will not be moved to eternity who lives in Jerusalem—possibly a personification of *Mons Sion.*)

In Psalm 126 (A. V.) "We were like them that dream" is "*facti sumus sicut consolati*" (we are made as those comforted); and "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" is

*Euntes ibant et flebant,  
mittentes semina sua.  
Venientes autem venient cum exultatione,  
portantes manipulos suos.*  
(Going, they go, and they weep,  
sowing their seed.  
Coming however, they come with exultation,  
carrying their handfuls.)

In Psalm 132:10 A. V., the phrase "of thine anointed" is "*Christi tui*." In 133:1 "Behold how good . . . to dwell together in unity" is strengthened by *Habitare fratres in unum* (brothers to live in one). The whole psalm is more beautiful in Latin. And the Latin title of the next psalm is music indeed: "*Invitantur excubitores templi ad Deum tota nocte laudandum*." (The guards of the temple are called to the praising of God all the night.) In 135:7, "he maketh lightnings for the rain" is a lovely line in the Latin: "*fulgura in pluviam fecit*." A beautiful, horrible line ends the "Rivers of Babylon" song, with no variation from the English meaning: "*Beatus qui tenebit, et allidet parvulos tuos ad petram*."

Psalm 139 A. V. has several variations from the Vulgate, perhaps the most interesting being in verse 14, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." This is quite different from "*Confitebor tibi, quia terribiliter magnificatus es*." (I will confess to thee, for thou art terribly magnificatus—literally, made great.) After all, the sublimity of God, even to the point of terror, seems a greater reason for praising him than that we are put together with bones and nine yards of digestion. But the English, "If I take the wings of the morning," excels this parallel passage: "*Si sumpsero pennas meas diluculo*" (If I shall take my wings at daybreak). In verse 2, "Thou knowest my downsitteing and mine uprising" is identical, except for tense, with "*Tu cognovisti sessionem meam et resurrectionem meam*," but the derivatives suggest whimsical thoughts. However, Jerome's work was done before the rise of Presbyterianism, so one must not translate, "Thou knowest my session and my resurrection."

Psalm 141, verse 5, A. V. "Let the righteous smite me; *it shall be* a kindness: and let him reprove me; *it shall be* an excellent oil, *which shall not break my head*: for yet my prayer also *shall be* in their calamities." This is more sensible in the Vulgate:

*Corripiet me justus in misericordia,  
et increpabit me;  
oleum autem peccatores non impinguet caput meum,  
quoniam adhuc et oratio mea in beneplacitis eorum.*

(Let the righteous snatch me away in pity,  
and he will reprove me;  
but let not the oil of sinners anoint my head,  
for yet my prayer also is for their blessing—literally, well pleasing.)

In the next verse "my words; for they are sweet" is *potuerunt*, suggesting power, not sweetness. In Psalm 142 A. V., "Refuge failed me" (verse 4) is "*Periit fuga a me*" (flight perished from me). Other quaint brevities (A. V. references) are Psalm 143:3, "as those that have been long dead"—"*sicut mortuos saeculi*" (like the dead of an age). Psalm 145:16, "Thou . . . satisfiest the desire of every living thing"—"*et imple omne animal benedictione*" (and fillest every animal with blessing). Psalm 146:7, "The Lord looseth the prisoners"—"*Dominus solvit compeditos.*" (The Lord looseth the shackled of feet.) In Psalm 147 (which with 146 in the Vulgate join to make 147 in A. V.), verse 9, "to the young ravens which cry" is "*pullis corvorum invocantibus eum*" (the pullets of the crows calling to him). And in the last psalm the "high sounding" cymbals of verse 5 are *cymbalis benesonantibus*.

Good is the staccato brevity of strong Saxon words, but the full organ tones of resounding Latin are precious to the initiated. Don't bury your high-school boy when he gives up Latin for typing; he may yet be all right to do errands, he may even be happy, for those who miss Virgil and the Vulgate do not know the tragedy of their privation. These little critical notes give no idea of the beauty of the many passages too long to quote which have adorned the margin of my Vulgate with green-ink exclamations of "real song," "superb," and "sublime anthem."

# Christian Faith and Greek Tragedy

DAVID E. ROBERTS

W. H. AUDEN has asserted that "Greek tragedy is the tragedy of necessity, i.e., the feeling aroused in the spectator is 'What a pity it had to be this way;' Christian tragedy is the tragedy of possibility, 'What a pity it was this way when it might have been otherwise'."<sup>1</sup>

The phrase "Christian tragedy" gives rise to many reflections. There are some who would claim that Christian faith is incompatible with a full appreciation of the tragedy of human existence; and although such appreciation cannot be measured infallibly by whether it is linked with the production of great tragic drama, the fact remains that Christianity has not notably fostered the latter. The names of Dante and Milton are enough, one might say, to show what happens to philosophical poetry when it comes under the aegis of the gospel; it may comprehend the tragic, as Milton does in *Samson Agonistes*, but such poetry inevitably moves within a doctrinal scheme that purports to lead "beyond tragedy." Hence the critic may urge that the ultimate resolution offered by Christian theology is incompatible with full awareness of human bondage. Suffering and despair which are provisional only, and are to be swallowed up in God's victory, are not suffering and despair as we encounter them.

From a sense of fair play the critic may add that Christianity need not degenerate into a sentimentalism which nervously affirms the tolerability of life in general and the perfectibility of man in particular. This degeneration is largely a modern product, reflecting the assumption that human power and divine power must be fused if the latter is to be acknowledged at all. No; Christianity can give full weight, within history, to the seeming indifference of nature, the disproportion between what a man deserves and what happens to him, and the inexorabilities of social evil. But so long as it continues to hold that redemption is always available for sin, faith for bafflement, and Providence for the ordering of human freedom, it refuses to face squarely the odds that man is up against.

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<sup>1</sup> *New York Times* Book Section, Dec. 16, 1945.

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So runs the charge. It implies that in order to be authentic, our sense of the tragic must be linked with perplexities that cannot be resolved by any means whatever—no more by faith than by speculation. It implies that Christianity lacks the courage which is in fact man's last citadel—the courage to recognize that many of the injustices, enslavements, and disasters of life are not remediable in any sense.

These implications can be supported weightily in a philosophical debate. Our more limited task is to enquire whether they underlie the conception of tragedy which is to be found within the greatest Greek dramas. Since the verdict proves to be negative so far as Aeschylus and Sophocles (at least) are concerned, we may prepare our minds for it by wondering whether the same characteristics of "the modern temper" which, according to Mr. Krutch, have made us well-nigh incapable of appreciating great tragedy, may not also have made us functionally blind and deaf to Christian interpretations of human nature. For though modern thought has not forgotten the cosmic setting of human life, it has depersonalized it. In its dealing with the perennial issues of fate and freedom it has begun by placing the initiative exclusively in man's hands; the contending forces ranged against him are to be manipulated so far as possible to conform with human needs and aims. When, because of temporary ignorance, lack of social enlightenment, or sheer unmanageability, these forces remain recalcitrant, the path of wisdom leads to resignation and adjustment—poignant often, but inescapable. Oddly enough, however, this same one-way passage between humanizing influences and nature, where the initiative seems to lie with man, ends by wrenching that initiative from him. For even the needs and aims by means of which he is ostensibly to organize a human environment in an otherwise purposeless process turn out to be themselves "natural" facts due to the interweaving within man's psyche and society of "natural" forces.

Where human personality is threatened with engulfment by the totalitarian claims of "scientism," no integral collaboration is possible between analysis and synthesis, empirical fact and poetic vision, feasibility and intrinsic value. A vicious antagonism between the humanities and technology is one result. And although neither philosophy nor theology can afford to admit that the antagonism is inevitable, it is clear that so long as the battle rages, religious faith has a stake in what the humanities seek to preserve. That this alliance between Christianity and "humanism" has often been obscured in our day is undeniable. Most of the theologian's energy has gone into a debate with science, far beyond the reach of any whisper

from the Muses. And much modern literature, reflecting the secularism of the age, has either been alien to Christian faith or, where amenable to it, that amenability has gone largely undiscerned by priest and poet alike.

Yet the sources of art and religion are allied; both assume that the responsiveness of imagination, feeling and aspiration, when joined with a disciplined sense of order and accounting of facts, is indispensable to full awareness of reality. Art languishes, as surely as does religion, whenever its content is taken to be mere fabrication which man spins out of himself like a spider. However nonfactual the images of poetry may be, its aim, in tragic literature at least, is to enhance wisdom, widen sympathy, enlighten the motives of action and the patterns of inward attitude, in such a way that we can find a stable orientation for humanness—its misery as well as its grandeur—in the scheme of things. In short, it is *not* the primary function of art to give us an illusory world to dwell in, thus furnishing momentary escape from the pressure of the "reality" which science alone can describe. The primary function of art is to awaken us fully to the heights and depths of what we are, and therefore to the heights and depths of the reality in which we are. Theologians are right in contending that poetic and doctrinal modes of expression are different; but in eagerness to safeguard their own propositions against the charge of being mere figments they have sometimes overlooked the basic assumption which needs to be attacked. This is the notion that emotion, commitment, and imaginative vision must necessarily lead away from truth instead of more deeply into it.

Such is the context in which we approach the fact that in the Athenian theater tragedy was conceived neither as totally irresolvable nor as resolvable by man alone. Not until Euripides do we find a departure from this rule, and even in his case it is difficult to understand his revulsion against popular conceptions of the gods except in terms of an implied—though confused—desire for a sound theology.

One of the main obstacles which prevents us from recognizing in the work of Aeschylus and Sophocles serious efforts to reach a theodicy by means of drama, is that their conceptions of responsibility are not ours. We find it hard to appreciate that earnest concern for order and limit which enabled them to regard any infringement of divine law as calling for rectification irrespective of the motives of the offender. According to our views, an action committed in ignorance is not deserving of punishment; and if a train of disastrous consequences ensues we regard them as due not to a justice higher than human (there is no such thing), but merely as manifesting natural cause and effect.

This lack of belief in suprahuman moral power prompts us, when we read *Prometheus*, to place our sympathies on his side immediately. His revolt against Zeus who would contemplate the annihilation of mankind is wholly justified, and the torments the Titan undergoes merely symbolize the fact that man's long upward struggle toward technical knowledge and civilization is a kind of agony fraught with peril. We wrest our human mastery from nature at the cost of stealing fiery secrets. Thus the interplay of contending forces which underlies *Prometheus Bound* and which probably reached fruition at the end of the trilogy, is largely lost upon modern readers unless they recover a sense for it by a deliberate act of imagination. That Aeschylus meant his audiences to be troubled by the vengefulness of Zeus goes without saying; but it is equally true that they could discern an appropriate connection between Prometheus' punishment and his rebellion where we cannot. For them Prometheus was not "Man," but a rebel in heaven. Moreover, the connotations to us of the word "fate" are such that we can find little meaning in attributing to *Moirai* that ultimate resolution whereby Zeus is moralized and Prometheus is set free.

For similar reasons we miss the full force of that pity and fear which were aroused at the spectacle of an Antigone, an Hippolytus, or an Orestes, who in the very course of remaining faithful to a sacred duty were driven to destruction or pursued by the Furies. We are acquainted with conflicts between duty and impulse, between human wish and natural circumstances; but divine sanctions which lay upon our human incapacity obligations that cannot be fulfilled, and then take a toll in suffering for our failure, strike us as tormenting superstitions that rational enlightenment has happily destroyed.

Again, our conception of the individual has become atomized as compared with that sense of communal solidarity whereby one man's deed can pollute a city or one ancient outrage can inaugurate a curse that trails through generations of a family's woe.

One may claim, with good reason, that in attempting to connect all human ruin with impiety, Aeschylus was laboring with a strained theodicy. (One may add, however, that he strikes the tragic note most deeply where his perplexity is deepest, whereas atheism is, of course, never perplexed by his problem.) The fact remains that he located the question concerning the meaning of human life where it belongs—in what W. M. Dixon has called "an affair with the gods." Unlike modern men, he neither sought an answer in terms of self-sufficient finitude nor dismissed the question about the moralization of fate as fruitless. Even though his honest recog-

dition of such innocent suffering as Io's may comport ill with his belief that the divine will is just; even though his soldierly creed of learning heroism and wisdom—which cannot be acquired through theorizing—by weathering the storms of life may leave much to be explained; nevertheless he introduces mystery at the right place—where human wit and conscience have done their utmost, and where the “resolution,” if there be one beyond the audible dissonances of life as we know it, lies in an everlasting mercy for which men can do little more than hope.

In Sophocles human character and motivation play a larger role, and the Aeschylean equation between suffering and sin is abandoned. Yet the central problem is hardly less acute inasmuch as his plays likewise must attribute human woe as well as human beatitude to the gods. The problem is posed in order to compel reflection at that point where rational comprehension falters; therefore perhaps “reflection” is too pale a word. For the ultimate purpose is not to pose a riddle, nor to throw men back upon the lonely realization that justice is their own invention, but to pass through the riddle, in heart as well as intellect, by looking beyond it to a divine harmony. Indeed, Sophocles' awareness of the complex intermingling of right and wrong, responsibility and fate, is so subtle that often the only reconciliation reached is one of emotional acceptance instead of one of speculative neatness.

Like his predecessor, he too exemplifies the fact that a dramatist can be faithful to what happens in life without abandoning his theological purpose. For one thing, suffering may be deserved, and the punishment of madness, as in the case of Ajax's defiant pride, may even roughly fit the crime. But innocent suffering is also a fact, and recognition of its occurrence forces Sophocles to look beyond external rewards and punishments for the completion of his conception of divine justice. In the *Antigone* we are made to see that religious fidelity may require suffering and be served through it—though such suffering is not unconnected with the claims of civic authority, which have their measure of justifiability even though they must be resisted if the supremacy of a higher order is to be vindicated. Whether fulfilled consciously or in ignorance, the reign of Providence is worth the cost of the agony it entails for the individual. If anyone regards this as the special pleading of a heartless dogmatist, let him read the choruses of Sophocles as they witness to the victim's fall.

In violating our sense of moral appropriateness, as the events of life do, the tragic drama thus places before our vision, in men of flesh and bone, the central theme of religion and philosophy: the discrepancy be-

tween existence and the ideal. The crucial issue lies in the purpose of this presentation. Is it to force an abandonment of the ideal—which is no airy dream but more intimately interwoven with what we mean by “human” than nerves and blood vessels? Is it to make us aware that we can retain decency and compassion only by taking up a lonely “everyman’s burden” against mindless forces which must finally triumph? Or is it to bring home the realization that a reconciliation cannot be taken for granted, but must be *won* through an awakening born of disaster?

The tragic drama would have no movement, there would be no function for conflict, no genuine venture with the possibility of loss as well as gain, unless it took departure from the fact of insecurity. But the task of the drama, as Aeschylus and Sophocles saw it—and here art may differ from life in transfiguring the latter—was to pass beyond desperation into reconciliation and acceptance.

This task would have been impossible had they not conceived of the “affair with the gods” as a conflict between one moral agency (human) and another (divine), wherein peace is achieved through insight. The divine will cannot be circumvented, no matter what man does; but full humanity—as contrasted with being the blind victim of fate—is reached at that point where man sees the fatuousness of his own aims in isolation from the gods, and thus accepts their will through a transformation of his own.

In these dramas, then, tragedy turns upon an interplay between fate and freedom. If Mr. Auden had meant (as he did not) that the “necessity” which dominates Greek tragedy were either blind or unrelieved, then he would be at a loss to account for the manner in which human decision contributes so momentously to the outcome. On the other hand, if man could achieve wisdom, security and self-sufficiency exclusively through his own free will, then his failures might be comic, but never tragic.

*Oedipus Rex* is an instance, perhaps the supreme instance, of how these various considerations may be seen together. When the play opens, the fundamental factors have been fixed by the past and the action must take place within their framework. Moreover, an inexorable course of events must be followed out until the violated divine order has been restored. Whether one stresses the guilt of Oedipus’ *hybris* or the innocence of his ignorance does not affect this objective fact. Yet the King contributes to his own doom by pronouncing a curse on the murderer and applying its terms specifically to himself. Prior to that, his own cleverness in answering the riddle of the Sphinx has put him in a position to marry Jocasta. Thus he confounds those tidy thinkers who may insist, on the one hand,

that a man's responsibility can be determined with exactitude, or on the other, that he has no responsibility whatever.

Even more impressive, however, is the manner in which we see human genius joined with obtuseness, and the working of divine will equated with that which tragically deepens self-understanding. The main features of Oedipus' "quest for truth" are worth comparing with any conception of that quest which assumes that dispassionate objectivity and a dash of purely cerebral sweat are the only requisites. He begins the enterprise because it is his royal function to carry it forward; but the path of enlightenment leaves him a blind outcast at the end. In order to find out who he really is, he must recover a past that was not of his own devising; and that self-knowledge which is linked with knowledge of the gods must make its impact by waiting until each ingenious evasion has been dissolved. *Oedipus at Colonus* might be cited as evidence that Sophocles pursued the educative value of suffering as an accompanying theme; but even within the limits of the present play one may behold how what P. H. Frye has called "the tragic qualm" issues in a resolution where—at a fearful price—human presumption has been replaced by discernment.

When we encounter the work of Euripides, however, the line of thought we have been following is cut athwart by a counterthesis. Though great tragic literature is compatible with faith in a divine moral order, it can also be written in conscious departure from such faith. Most of his extant plays depict the gods in an unfavorable, even an obnoxious, light; yet his iconoclasm seems to spring from the conviction that if there were a dependable and discernible divine will, it would be morally good. One of his main concerns is to convince the Athenians that their capricious and implacable divinities are illusions into which they have projected their own human folly. Like most iconoclasts, Euripides is much more gifted in posing sophisticated questions than in winning through to a positive reconstruction. So far as his own theology may be inferred it seems to have been a kind of pantheism in which natural law and Reason (including human reason) are united; in the main, however, he seeks recompense for the death of the gods in his own human compassion. He was a "modern" in the sense that he shifted the center of interest to psychological forces; he was a "modern" in the sense that he cut the ground from under his own appreciation of the horrors of war, the demonry of human passion, and the pathos of self-sacrifice by leaving his humanitarianism hanging in thin air. The dominant impression left by his plays is that life is mainly pitiable, sometimes flickers into fugitive exaltation, and is finally pointless.

It is primarily to Euripides one must look, therefore, in seeking within Greek tragic literature for what might be called "aesthetic" faith as an alternative to religious faith. In defense of this aesthetic alternative it might be argued that by displaying the worst, poetry evokes the best in us; by facing bafflement utterly and fully, it yields a certain serenity; by means of a thorough indictment of the universe, a light can be kindled in the very center of darkness. Accordingly, poetry will be regarded as the mentor which can teach man to look for sufficiency within himself, since he will never find it elsewhere. It promises to lift us above being impotent victims, since by our knowledge of a heedless fate we become in a sense superior to that fate. Instead of weaving an illusory fabric of divine purpose and love around suffering, it enables us to meet suffering by distilling beauty from it. The device of religious faith is dubious, one might contend, depending for validity upon a realm which lies forever hidden. The device of art is certain, and it is available in the present; it can give meaning to life now by taking the worst misery and making it serve eloquence instead of dullness and degradation. The religious believer must rest his case upon the attitude of a hypothetical Deity, and await God's answer in eternity before he can ever know whether life is a glorious venture or a rotten joke. The poet can engage now in the tragic business of becoming a soul, with the knowledge that it is worth doing in itself. The man of God, by pinning his hopes upon an even more stupendous meaning, runs the risk of having been eternally duped.

Thus within the confines of Athenian drama we encounter a question which might be generalized. The tragic note can be sounded in plays that tend to undermine belief in a divine moral order, as well as in plays that grope toward the discernment of such an order. Is the greatness of the tragedy affected by which alternative is followed? Aristotle, when he ranked Euripides as "the most tragic of all poets," cannot have been heedless of the implication. Conversely, other critics have attempted to demonstrate that there is a correlation between Euripides' defects as a dramatist and the sophistry of his world view. All answers to the question are bound to be inconclusive, however, because the tragic quality depends upon profundity, and what one regards as profound depends, in the end, on what one believes to be the truth.

Instead of attempting to judge the merit of a Greek tragedy by the extent to which it conforms to our theological predilections, we should learn to derive both enjoyment and edification from all three dramatists on a somewhat different score. Whether we are theological rationalists

or scientific rationalists, we can learn from such works that the interweaving of fate and responsibility, despair and faith, is much more complex in life than in thought. It is instructive to remember that both Plato and the Stoics looked askance at the poets in order to cling to a theory concerning the moral order of the world. Plato specifically rules out poetry which tells of undeserved misfortune, because it implies that God must be the author of evil. This poses a terrible dilemma: either agonizing compassion or belief in Providence, but not both. And since Plato and the Stoics had a hand in furnishing the philosophical categories which Christian theology employed, it is true that much of the latter faces the same dilemma.

But there has always been a countermovement within Christian theology which makes room for feeling and imagination against the demands of rationalism. It discerns God himself as the bearer of undeserved suffering. It redefines omnipotence in terms of a divine love which takes upon itself the consequences of its own moral order. This Christian faith is not strictly rational, because at the crucial point it offers a mystery instead of an explanation. A neat, conclusive "explanation" of discord and evil is alien to the spirit of great tragic literature, that of Aeschylus and Sophocles no less than that of Euripides. It is also incompatible with profound Christian faith. Actually the biblical accounts of man which tell of his inner divisions, his solidarity in guilt, and his estrangement from nature, his fellows, and God, are much closer to Greek tragedy than to Pelagius, Leibniz, or Kant. The best theologians have always been aware—sometimes in spite of their systems—that God's implication in human sin and suffering on Calvary can only be represented dramatically, since it overleaps all philosophical thought. Hence if Christian faith in God goes beyond anything imagined by the Greek dramatists, as it does, that is not because it leaves their awareness of the bitterness of life aside, but because it is based upon a life that passed through bitterness redemptively.

There are moments when we must lay misery bare instead of trying to explain it. We must acknowledge ourselves as destined to live in individual solitariness, where knowledge cannot enable us to foresee adequately the consequences of our own actions and where compassion cannot disentangle us from the web of competitive struggle and inherited evils. We must acknowledge that the noblest and best men suffer torments incommensurate with any faults they have. We are appalled not only by willful sin and folly, but by the mysterious workings of evil beyond and despite man. In all such circumstances where sorrow, anguish, and dread are appropriate to our actual situation, the attempt to stifle them in order

to retain a philosophical or theological system leaves a man rigid and numb. We reach peace, if we reach it at all, only by passing through the fiery whirlwind, not by running away from it or by building theories about it.

When a bad version of Christianity offers schematic concepts in the face of human ruin, we have a right to turn to tragic literature, among other things (which might include the Bible!), in our revolt. But what tragic literature presents may enrich religious faith instead of destroying it, by letting loose our imaginative sympathies instead of shackling them. Trust cannot really triumph unless the full strength of its opponent, despair, is brought to light and recognized. Indeed, it is only through travail of heart and conscience that Christians have a right to look for fellowship with God. For at the center of the gospel is the fact that God himself stands beyond tragedy only by passing through it with us.

# Utilizing the Arts in Worship

VICTOR FIDDES

**A** BROAD SUBJECT like this demands definition at the outset. We shall define Christian worship as that act whereby man comes, or seeks to come, consciously into fellowship with God through Jesus Christ. Thus defined, worship is seen to be an end in itself, and, just because it is an end in itself the arts should be utilized not "for art's sake," but rather to serve the legitimate needs of worship. Whatever value music, architecture, painting, decoration, sculpture, and oratory may have in their own right, when utilized in worship they serve the glory of God, not their own glory. It is said that on one occasion when Mr. W. E. Gladstone, the British statesman, returned from a court reception which his wife had been unable to attend, Mrs. Gladstone asked, "What did the queen wear?" "She was very appropriately dressed," replied Gladstone, "for I never noticed what she wore." So with the garb of worship! The arts best succeed when they are forgotten in the larger end they serve in bringing the worshiper to the vision and enjoyment of God.

It is important to get this relationship of art to worship properly in mind, for the attempt is being made in many of our churches today to create beauty for beauty's sake, to allow artistic and aesthetic rather than properly religious considerations to determine what shall be done in the adornment of our church buildings. A valid criticism of some recent innovations in church furnishings might be made on the ground that it is not clear what end they serve in worship. Dean Sperry tells of a magnificent church in a western American city which was highly commended by the interchurch movement experts as an almost perfect "plant." "The pulpit or chancel end of that church," he says, "is an inscrutable riddle. No one entering the church and lifting his eyes to the far end would find the slightest intimation as to what the Christian religion means to any worshiper there. The wealth of flat oak paneling suggests a congregation falling down to the stock of a tree. One infinitely prefers

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that crude anchor in the Maine meeting house because it has a religious idea behind it."<sup>1</sup>

However we utilize the arts in worship we must utilize them for the sake of God and not for their own sake. We can do without most of the so-called aids to worship if we have to, but we cannot do without the religious reality which they were meant to express. We shall not go far astray in our use of the arts if we keep asking the questions: What does the art do? Is it worth doing? Does it do it well?

### THE DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY CHURCH

The earliest worship of the Christian church, of course, was carried on in the home. Professor James Moffatt in the introduction of his commentary on *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* describes the Christian worship of the first century in these words:

The more general service of the Word corresponded to the synagogal precedent with its stress on religious instruction . . . education was the most prominent feature of worship at a synagogue. Rightly or wrongly, at Corinth it was still the ministry of the Word by inspired apostles, prophets, teachers, and catechists, not sacramental rites, which formed the invigorating and authoritative service of worship. The Church met to hear and understand this Word (1 Cor. XIV: 36), which bound them to God and to one another. . . . The central pulse of the whole service beat in spoken word and testimony upon the distinctive mysteries of the Gospel (XIV:19) which the love feast represented realistically as a symbol of fellowship.<sup>2</sup>

When the Christian church outgrew the home it took over the Roman basilicas, the earliest of which buildings were probably simple oblong structures devoid of transepts and wings. An apse at the end contained the bishop's seat, probably with the deacons' chairs around it. A small movable reading desk known as an *ambo* (Greek for "a place to which one walks up") provided the equivalent of the later pulpit or lectern. A movable wooden table was used for the administration of the Lord's Supper. The provision in the early centuries of the church was for a unified ministry of the Word and sacraments, the sacrament of Holy Communion itself being a symbolic expression of the gospel.

It is significant that the problem facing the Nonconformist churches today in the arrangement of their furnishings is the very problem which confronted the early church—the problem of the relative positions of pulpit and communion table, and of the bishop's and elders' chairs.

<sup>1</sup> Willard L. Sperry, *Reality in Worship*, The Macmillan Company, 1925, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> Harper & Brothers, 1938, pp. xxiii and xxiv.

## THE CENTRAL PULPIT

It would appear that the Nonconformist custom of placing the preacher at or near the end of the church *behind* the communion table has a venerable precedent and is not one to be despised on historical grounds. There are still many people in our churches who feel that the ministry of the Word is best expressed symbolically by a central pulpit with a central and accessible communion table in front of it. Such people may not know what the divided chancel with its altarlike table and dossal hangings or reredos represents, but they do know what the pulpit with its open Bible and the communion table below it mean; and an architect, instead of trying to convince such people that their religious instinct has a wrong center, might be better advised to capitalize on the one sound religious conviction they still possess.

If they want the Word of God central, then let it be made central in the simplest and most effective way possible. All the other aids to worship—decoration, windows, organ, choir—should contribute to rather than detract from an effective ministry of the Word and sacraments. The pulpit should be put properly in the center of the church, perhaps in a small alcove or apse, the cross high above it or behind it. It should be given a substantial, almost massive appearance, wide and high enough to dominate the scene, as in some of those substantial eighteenth-century meeting houses in England which were used for Presbyterian and Congregational worship. The communion table should be placed immediately below the pulpit with elders' chairs behind it. It is important that the furnishings all harmonize in design and color. Care and restraint is particularly important in the decoration and furnishing of a church with the central pulpit. At some point or other in every service the minister loses the attention of some members of his congregation. If a worshiper looks away from the pulpit or communion table to count organ pipes, or trace the stencil around a plaster arch, or solve the geometric puzzle in a window, he will find it difficult to recapture the spirit of worship for the remainder of the service. Puritan architecture has much to commend it where the central pulpit is desired, for its simplicity imposes a restraint upon the careless use of decoration and serves to draw the eye and interest of the worshiper back to the pulpit or table.

The location of the choir is something of a problem in the church with a central pulpit. The Roman Catholic practice of placing the choir

and organ in the rear gallery has much to commend it, but most congregations have too keen an interest in the personnel of the choir to consider this. One solution is the provision of a shallow transept at the front and a transept opposite for the organ. If an electric organ or small instrument is used the transept opposite might be used as a side chapel.

### THE CHANCEL-STYLE CHURCH

But the trend appears to be definitely away from the central pulpit in favor of the elevated communion table, and in so far as this trend represents not simply an aesthetic revolt but a genuine desire on the part of the church to recapture the experience of fellowship which the focus of a communion table suggests, the change is to the good. One feels, however, that there ought to be evidence in the Order of Worship itself that the minister and congregation are aware of the significance of this change. Let me quote from a letter which a young minister of our church addressed to the correspondence columns of *The United Church Observer* a few months ago:

Dear Sir: . . . . in the matters of its architecture and order of service, the United Church is getting into a state of confusion. Again and again *The Observer* carries pictures of "rearranged and redecorated" churches where the pulpit has been pulled over to one side (or the other)<sup>3</sup> and a rather insignificant-looking communion table has been boosted up onto the platform in front of a shallow empty chancel. What does this rearrangement mean? It means nothing more than confusion. Our ministers are striving after one emphasis in architecture but another in the order of their services. For almost all of them regard their sermon as the high point of worship, not the Lord's Table. If our services were true to the Apostolic tradition and were, with or without the use of bread and wine, patterned after the Lord's Supper, then there would be some reason for this rearrangement of the church. But it is not so. . . . The Lord's Table has little place in our worship except once a quarter, and even then it is so often merely a remembrance. Why then this rearrangement? I welcome it if it means something; if it means that we are returning to the Apostolic order of worship which is our true Reformation inheritance. But I do not see this in our style of worshiping. It appears to me as an empty stylism.

A similar protest is made by Cyril C. Richardson in the Autumn 1947 issue of *Christendom*, where he says: "A revival of the centrality of the Eucharist in our worship would do much toward church unity. *But it would have to be a genuine revival.*"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The pulpit should be placed on the left side of the congregation, since the custom in the early church was to read the Gospel from that side.

<sup>4</sup> *Christendom*, Vol. XII, No. 4, p. 446. Italics mine.

It is rather surprising that congregations have not taken more readily to the provision which The Book of Common Order makes for a service patterned after the Lord's Supper. The main elements in this Second Directory, as it is called, are (1) the Word of God read and preached (the lessons and the sermon) and (2) the fellowship of intense and intimate prayer, conducted from behind the table. The service is a Eucharist—a sacrifice of prayer and praise—even when the Lord's Supper is not celebrated. Calvin followed this order at Geneva and claimed that "it agrees with the administration in the Ancient Church of the Apostles, Martyrs, and Holy Fathers."

There is no need to prolong this excursion in the field of liturgics, but certainly it is not irrelevant to the subject at this point. We shall consider now the design and furnishing of the type of church which makes the communion table the focal point in the design. And we ought to speak of the table consistently as the table and not as the altar. An altar set against the wall is incongruous with the Reformed tradition. There is no evidence of altars being used in early Christian worship. It was not until after the fourth century that the holy table of primitive Christianity was enclosed to contain the relics of martyrs and regarded as an altar. Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin states:

The table should be unmistakably a table, recalling the table in the Upper Room about which Christ's followers gather, and where he, spiritually present, meets them. It should not be set against the wall, for in the Primitive Church and in the Reformed tradition the minister stands behind it, facing the congregation, in the administration of the communion, in order that his symbolic acts may be seen.<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Coffin's advice is timely, for an increasing number of churches are placing the table against the end wall of the chancel and speaking of it deliberately as the altar. Justification of this practice is found in the fact that the altar recalls Calvary and thus suggests the final sacrifice which Jesus made: "Once in the end of the age hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Protestant Christianity, however, worships not a crucified but a *risen* Savior, and a table to which both minister and people have common access is more suggestive of Christ's living, saving presence, while remaining true to the spirit of Calvary, than a remote altar which the minister or priest can approach only by turning his back to the people. Something may be said, indeed, for the cubical *style* of table, the design of which seeks to avoid that suggestion

<sup>5</sup> *The Public Worship of God*. Westminster Press, 1946, p. 59.

of household furniture which so many communion tables conjure up; but whatever the design, let it be used as the Holy Table and not as an altar!

It is significant that while there is a tendency on the part of the Free Churches, especially in the United States, to take over the design of the medieval church, lock, stock, and barrel, complete with sanctuary, high altar, and reredos,<sup>6</sup> there is a movement in the Roman Church, and to a lesser degree in the Anglican, to remove the high altar from the sanctuary and bring it down to the people. The Benedictines are urging their fellow churchmen to restore the primitive usage in which the bishop stood behind the table—a position known as the “Basilican” position, which is used today in St. Peter’s, Rome, because it has been traditional from the earliest days. And Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in his plan for the reconstruction of Coventry Cathedral brought the altar out to the “crossing” where it would find its place in the midst of the people—a plan which, unfortunately, has been rejected by the committee.

The chancel in our churches should be shallow enough to enable the minister to be seen and heard by all when he officiates, whether from the communion table, pulpit, or lectern. It should be broad enough to provide ample space for the table and elders’ chairs without any suggestion of crowding. This is particularly important if accommodation is to be provided in the chancel for the choir. It is better to have the choir stalls recessed in some way than to have them occupy a disproportionate area of the chancel. The lines of the choir should be so simple and the furnishings so restrained that the eye of the worshiper will be led past them to the communion table and sedilia where the symbolism that is used can be used to full advantage.

Particular care should be given to the furnishings of the communion table. While there is room for difference of opinion on many details, most authorities are agreed on the guiding principles. Walter Lowrie, the outstanding authority today on art in the early church, states that “candles were not much used except in processions, and they were not placed upon the altar. It hardly needs to be said,” he adds, “that the petty pagan practice of strewing the altar with flowers was not adopted by the church. So long as the celebrant stood behind the altar, facing the

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<sup>6</sup> See, for example, T. A. Stafford’s *Christian Symbolism in the Evangelical Churches*, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942. In Chapter X on “The Symbolism of a Church” the author apparently is prepared to incorporate into evangelical worship almost every medieval idea which grew up to accommodate the mass!

people, a cross or crucifix upon the altar would have been an intolerable obstruction."<sup>7</sup> The cross, properly speaking, should be behind or above the table. On the table itself there should be symbols of action related to the Word and act of the gospel. Flowers are of no such significance, nor are empty collection plates. Dr. George MacLeod of Iona, Scotland, states that in the Calvinistic churches of Geneva two symbols are invariably found—the resurrection cross behind the communion table and the open Book upon it.

The resurrection Cross (not crucifix) speaks of the completed act. The communion table should stand beneath, out from the wall as in primitive and reformist days, to remind us of this human family that, in Christ, we have become. Nor should aught else be on it than the open Book . . . only three symbols should ever be placed on it—the offerings of our gift when a collection is made; the elements of bread and wine when there is celebrated the Act of Offering; and the open Book that declares the truth and shows the way to share his Life.<sup>8</sup>

He suggests that flowers might be placed beside the cross behind the table, for in the place where Christ was crucified there was a garden, and it was in a garden that he was first seen as the risen Lord. Dr. Coffin suggests that the cross be placed at the entrance to the chancel, suspended from the ceiling, as in the rood of ancient churches.

A trichair or sedilia provides an effective background for the table and can be made to harmonize with or accentuate the table itself. Dossal hangings, or murals, or carvings can be very effective in the background if planned with a view to emphasizing the central experience which the Holy Table suggests. But the work must be done well. A sound, general rule for the furnishing of the end wall of the chancel is the rule of restraint. Any work of art, as Ruskin says, must of necessity be a costly work, and, as few congregations can afford a heavy outlay for chancel embellishments, it would seem to be the better part of wisdom to employ the funds that are available in the creation of a simple but meaningful design rather than to overdo the chancel with elaborate and fulsome decorations.

Particular care must be taken in the provision of chancel windows. The temptation is to put a large, impressive window at the center of the end wall above the communion table. Few chancels are high enough to take it well, and what usually happens is that the window rather than the symbols of Word and sacrament dominates the church. Arti-

<sup>7</sup> Walter Lowrie, *Art in the Early Church*. Pantheon Books, Inc., 1947, p. 119.

<sup>8</sup> George MacLeod, *We Shall Rebuild*. Kirkridge, Witherspoon Bldg., Philadelphia, 1945, p. 68.

ficial windows, of course, should not be employed. The purpose of a window is to let in light, and it is doubly deceptive to place a window where it cannot receive light and then to create light in order to show it up.

One of the most successful treatments of the end wall of any Canadian church is to be seen in the chancel of the Erskine and American United Church in the city of Montreal. A simple marble holy table stands out against a dark paneled background. The area above the paneling is bare and unadorned except for a great Greek cross high up on the wall which, when illuminated, emits rays of light suggestive of a divine Presence. Westmount Park United Church in the same city provides a splendid example of simplicity of line in the chancel. In this church the table and sedilia, rather elaborately carved, stand out against a restrained background. Three small lancet windows suggest an upward movement of the eye without detracting attention from the table. The Leaside United Church, Toronto, has been treated very successfully. The chancel is the same width as the nave, and the communion table is placed well forward, creating a feeling of both spaciousness and warmth, lacking in most of our newer suburban Gothic structures.

Happily the day is passing when the worshiper has to focus his attention upon an array of gilded organ pipes. But while the organ pipes ought not to be conspicuous, there is no need to go to the other extreme and pretend that they are not there. Simple unpainted pipes at the side of the chancel or in a transept are not objectionable, and they are more honest than heavy carved screens which don't quite conceal them. The organs themselves are often too large and costly for the buildings they adorn. Albert Schweitzer claimed that a handmade, two-manual instrument is suitable for the ordinary requirements of worship. It is likely that the church of the future will think less of the *size* of both its organ and choir and consider more carefully the utilization of the musician's arts in terms of worship requirements.

#### THE NAVE

The general rule of restraint that we have laid down applies particularly in the treatment of the nave of the church building. The lines of the nave should be straightforward and consistent. The fault with many of the Nonconformist churches that were built in the last century was not that the pulpit was in the center, but that nothing was

in the center. They seemed to lack a controlling principle in their design. Arches pointed upward, galleries swept inward, aisles ran downward, organ pipes marched across the front; and the worshiper found himself suspended somewhere in the middle of all that, not knowing just where to focus his attention. With the elimination of the side galleries and the lengthening of the nave in our newer churches, much of that confusion is done away. The eye is led to the front, and the center aisle serves to tie the nave in with the chancel. The center aisle must be wide enough, however, to invite ready access to the communion table. For this reason the carpet or linoleum of the center aisle should lead directly to the table without being broken at the chancel steps.

Of special importance is the treatment of the windows in the nave. The purpose of a window, as we said above, is to let in light. If the window can convey a spiritual message while doing so, so much the better! but if the window is there primarily to draw attention to itself, its presence is to be deplored. Nowhere has money been spent more carelessly and fulsomely in the service of the church than in the provision of so-called stained-glass windows. The results are often as jarring spiritually as they are aesthetically. Thomas Stafford in his book, *Christian Symbolism in the Evangelical Churches*, tells of a Protestant congregation in America that made itself the laughingstock of the community because it selected the papal arms for prominent display in a window.

In accepting memorial windows a congregation should consider each window in relation to the whole and work out a symbolic treatment of the glass that is suggestive of an ascending movement of spiritual values. If the nave is fairly long this can be done very effectively. The windows might depict, for example, the revelation of God:

in creation  
in the provision of the Law (Moses)  
in history (Isaiah)  
in personal experience (Jeremiah)  
in Jesus (prophet, priest, and King).

Or they might depict the person and work of Jesus:

King from the Davidic line  
his birth  
his life (words and works)  
rejection and death  
triumphant resurrection and ascension.

In the Metropolitan United Church, Toronto, the windows of the east

aisle depict Jesus' teachings, and the windows of the west aisle depict his miracles. The great chancel window explains both the words and works of Jesus in terms of his divine sovereignty.

Whatever the treatment of the windows, it should be biblical in its inspiration. There is no experience of life that cannot find classical expression somewhere in the Old and New Testaments, and to substitute for the timeless illustrations of the Bible some contemporary illustration is to invite unfortunate comparison. A war memorial window, for example, which depicts soldiers in the garb of their twentieth-century conflicts will soon appear dated, whereas a memorial such as that at the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, depicting the sacrifice of King David's trusted servants, will never be dated.

The concentration of color in the interior of the nave is an important consideration; and in not a few cases windows detract from the spirit of worship by drawing attention from the chancel, where color should be concentrated, to the side aisles. The writer would like to offer the bold suggestion that a congregation which contemplates a series of new windows might stand up to the commercial glass firms and insist, over all their protests, upon a simple symbolic treatment of the glass over against the customary picture-style windows (most of which are not stained glass anyway), the colors to accentuate rather than to dominate the interior effect.

If the windows serve their proper function, little or no artificial light will be required in the church for services during the day. The style of lighting fixtures themselves should be determined by the general design and furnishings of the building. Simple lanterns with proper reflectors are as efficient as concealed fixtures and have the added advantage of illuminating the ceiling, where color can be used very effectively. The judicious use of color on the ceiling can give both dignity and warmth to the building—dignity because of the added height which it suggests, warmth because of its tones. Concealed lighting can be used effectively in the chancel, but any suggestion of theatrical effects should be avoided. Fluorescent lights should not be used in the nave of the church until such time as the manufacturers can provide something better than a warehouse type of fixture.

#### THE STRUCTURE

It should not be necessary to say that the nave should be well-

proportioned, but how often this elementary principle is overlooked. Many of the newer churches are too low for their length. Height should not be sacrificed for utility. A simple oblong structure is satisfactory. There is no need to have transepts unless to provide for a side chapel or choir.<sup>9</sup> There is no need to have artificial Gothic arches and shallow side aisles along the nave. They are costly to build and they serve no practical purpose in worship. If the money which some of our newer suburban churches spent in the past twenty-five years on sham Gothic arches had gone into honest workmanship in a simple and lofty nave, the results would be more satisfactory. In the design of our churches we ought to strive for substance and dignity rather than for prettiness.

### THE STYLE

The question of the style of architecture best suited to the requirements of the modern church is a live one. The writer suggested Puritan architecture as being well suited to the requirements of a church with the central pulpit. But Puritan design is rather too severe for a church with the divided chancel. The central communion table requires warmth as well as dignity, and Puritan architecture offers little warmth. Gothic is the most popular and the most widely abused style today, but the Gothic style does not lend itself readily to methods of modern construction. Building has passed from the stone age to the steel age. In order to erect a Gothic church today it is necessary literally to "abuse" the material—to bend steel and lath into shapes they were never meant to take. This is a costly task, and some would say a dishonest one. A more serious objection to the Gothic is that its lines presuppose a rather majestic movement of the eye which finds its focus at the high altar. Gothic architecture provides a perfect vehicle for the office of the mass. But that movement, majestic as it is, belongs to the spirit of neither primitive nor reformed worship. It is significant that the churches of the Reformation deliberately rejected Gothic architecture because of its popish associations. Even in England, where Gothic came to such noble expression in the cathedrals, no Anglican church erected between the reigns of Charles I and William IV, that is, during a period of about two hundred years, was built in the Gothic style.

<sup>9</sup> There is much to be said for the provision of a side chapel which is accessible both to the nave and the street. The main doors of the nave can then be kept closed through the week, while the chapel is open at all times for prayer and meditation. The triptych lends itself ideally to such a worship center.

Modern architecture because of its simplicity and its honest use of materials holds real possibilities for church design. The chief criticism of modern functional architecture is that it has failed to gain a sense of continuity with the past, and, while this may not be a valid objection in the erection of secular buildings, it is a valid objection when it comes to erecting churches. Modern architecture will be successfully utilized in the church when it can be shown that its principles are adaptable to the requirements of an institution that has historic consciousness. Unfortunately few examples of successful treatment of modern church architecture are at hand to inspire one.

Christian worship found perhaps its noblest expression in Byzantine architecture, and Byzantine remains to this day the truest artistic manifestation of the early and undivided church. That Byzantine architecture is worthy of more consideration in Protestant church architecture than it has hitherto received, and is capable of interpretation in terms of the requirements of the modern church, anyone who has visited Christ Church, Methodist, in New York City will agree. In the design of this impressive church the architect, the late Dr. Ralph Adams Cram, deliberately forsook the Gothic in the attempt to build what he called "a modern church in accordance with the principles that controlled what may be called the primitive architecture of the Primitive Church." The modern church cannot, nor is it desirable that it should, recapture in copied form the artistic expressions of a golden age now gone; but the modern church may well be guided by the principles which inspired the early church in its utilization of the arts—principles which, under the guidance of God, brought the worshiper out of the catacombs and placed him under the great dome of St. Sophia's in Constantinople. The experience which ordinary men and women had of belonging to a Christ-centered fellowship, existing in the world but not of it, worshipping a living Savior on whose Word they could feed and at whose table they could gather, decided the use which was to be made of the arts in worship; and we may hope that out of just such an experience the modern church will find inspiration for its use of the contemporary arts.

# The Significance of "Communion" in the Synoptic Tradition

BUCKLEY STEPHENS RUDE

AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE on Faith and Order, held in Edinburgh in 1937, no issue brought forth more dissension than the very symbol of Christian unity and brotherhood, the celebration of Holy Communion. Perhaps one way for restoring some basis for unity would be to re-examine the significance of "communion" in its wider context in the Synoptic Gospels, tracing it back to Jesus and his disciples and showing the development of its origins in these records.

Jesus, according to the oldest layers of synoptic tradition, acknowledged no ultimate kinship of blood or race. For him the only ultimate kinship was the communion of those whose lives were completely responsive to and controlled by the sovereign will of God.<sup>1</sup> This communion, already a source of real joy to Jesus and his disciples (Matt. 9:14-16), was expected to continue among them after the arrival of God's coming Kingdom (Luke 22:14-18, 29-30). Thus, a spiritual bond, emerging among Jesus and his disciples out of a sense of common sonship to God, was one aspect of the Kingdom which was to remain unchanged by outward circumstances in time and eternity.

Already in the present age, the benefits from the new communion were promised to accrue to its members. Although the disciples who renounced all to follow Jesus were due to be harassed by persecutions, the end result would be not only a closer spiritual tie among the brethren but a community of houses and lands, meaning more for each in sharing the whole (Mark 10:29-30). Wendt has described the relationship as one in which "the community of goods, and the close tie . . . would bind together the members of the Kingdom of God in the bond of mutually helpful love. . . . Along with that, we must consider

<sup>1</sup> Mark 3:34. The widely quoted doctrine of the "fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man," if implying an inherent claim to equal status by all men before God and one another, was hardly held by Jesus. Effectual brotherhood is conditioned on obedience. Cf. Luke 12:51-53; Mark 3:31-35.

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all the other experiences, goods, and powers, temporal or spiritual, in which the disciples shall, through the fatherly love of God, become sharers."<sup>2</sup>

Brief references in the Gospels show us that a powerful spirit of community already existed among the disciples which extended beyond their own immediate fellowship (Luke 8:3; John 12:4-6; Mark 10:21). The practice of sharing one's goods with the poor and needy was rooted at the heart of the new brotherhood.<sup>3</sup> To perform these acts of trust and love meant to lay up treasure with the heavenly Father. No more penetrating understanding of this spirit to which Jesus referred is to be found than in the so-called "Gospel according to the Hebrews." This document (fragments of which are quoted by Jerome about the end of the fourth century A.D.), which is itself rather closely parallel though probably secondary to Matthew's Gospel, gives the following as Jesus' reply to the rich man seeking eternal life: "How sayest thou: I have kept the law and the prophets? For it is written in the law: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, and lo, many of thy brethren, sons of Abraham, are clad in filth, dying for hunger, and thine house is full of many good things and nought at all goeth out of it unto them."<sup>4</sup> If Jesus did not explicitly use these words, others of his teachings and activities nevertheless incorporate the spirit of them.

In at least three respects, the breaking of bread by Jesus as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels is significant in expressing the life of communion in the immediate circle of his disciples. First of all, the breaking and dispensing of bread by Jesus is recorded to have had symbolic meaning, known only to the inner circle (Mark 6:52; 8:14-21; cf. John 6:26-34). The disciples were thereby set apart as initiates into the mystery of Jesus' purpose and role in relation to the impending reign of God. Indeed, the symbolic significance of the feedings of the multitudes seems to have been missed by the disciples, much to the amazement of Jesus (Mark 10:21 and parallels). At the Last Supper the symbolism is frankly implied by Jesus when he distributes the bread and the wine (Matt. 26:26 and parallels). Secondly, in the record of the feedings

<sup>2</sup> Wendt, H., *The Teaching of Jesus*, Vol. I, pp. 239-40. Cf. H. D. A. Major, in Major, Manson, and Wright, *The Mission and Message of Jesus*. The Macmillan Company, 1941, p. 133, on Mark 10:28-30.

<sup>3</sup> Mark 10:21; Luke 12:33; Matt. 6:20. This practice hardly implies that the poor thereby became members of the brotherhood of disciples. The good will of the disciples could well be faced with resistance and persecution. Matt. 5:11.

<sup>4</sup> James, M. R., *The Apocryphal New Testament*. Oxford University Press, 1924, p. 6.

of the multitudes, emphasis falls on the oversufficiency despite the scanty provisions the disciples were at first able to muster. While this incident may be due to the embellishment of the miraculous in the stories, its importance is shown by the discussion over it afterward by Jesus and his disciples.<sup>5</sup> God, through Jesus' act of faith, is meeting the need of the hour not merely with enough but with a superabundance. The third significant aspect of the breaking of bread is the centrality of Jesus in his act of dispensing it. At this point in the Gospel narrative, the Master takes on a significance beyond that of rabbi, holy man, or prophet for those of the inner circle to whom is given the insight to understand his role in blessing and breaking the bread. The Markan narrative significantly follows the feeding of the four thousand (after an interval of five verses), by Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ.<sup>6</sup> When Jesus dispenses the food at the Last Supper again, he unfolds its special significance in relation to his person.<sup>7</sup> The Lucan narrative of the disciples' walk from Emmaus states that Jesus was known to them only through the blessing and breaking of bread (Luke 24:30-31).

Why did tradition seize upon this act of blessing, breaking, and distributing the bread on which to center the significant aspects of the life of Jesus? Was it not because of the fact that, in commemorating this act, the first Christian community was united as one in its testimony to Jesus as the Messiah through whom the benefits of the Kingdom of God were inaugurated for its members? Men had stood as suppliants before Jesus. They were hungry, and he fed them; they were diseased and broken, and he brought them health; they were guilty, and he assured them divine forgiveness; they were disobedient to God, and he reconciled them. That is the testimony of the Synoptic Gospels: that is the conviction of the earliest Christian community about Jesus which became embodied in these Gospels.

Thus, the Kingdom of God was already present in him who inaugurated it.<sup>8</sup> Discipleship meant not only becoming participants but recipients; men were indeed called to become as children in order to receive the benefits of the Kingdom from its Lord (Luke 18:71; cf. Matt.

<sup>5</sup> Mark 6:42-23; 8:8 and parallels. Cf. Matt. 16:9-12 and Mark 8:16-21.

<sup>6</sup> Mark 8:19-27ff. It is a five-verse interval, assuming that Jesus' discussion about bread belongs to the previous incident of the feeding of the multitude.

<sup>7</sup> Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19a. Of course it is assumed that Paul's account (1 Cor. 11:24ff) is the oldest we have in the New Testament.

<sup>8</sup> Manson, William, *Christ's View of the Kingdom of God*. George H. Doran Co., 1918, p. 83.

18:3). But Jesus' life purpose of dispensing the benefits of the Kingdom of God is supremely symbolized in the Last Supper. "This is my body, which is for you" (I Cor. 11:24; cf. Luke 22:19). In these words, or in the briefer saying, "This is my body," with the simple act of distribution, as recorded by Luke, the final act of dedication took place. Perhaps Jesus saw in this final act that he was taking upon himself the punishment due Israel for its sins in order to bring in the Kingdom in its fullness. He took this means of identifying himself with the righteous remnant which was to suffer for all. He was to be their representative. The idea was not foreign to the Old Testament that one man should offer himself in behalf of the people (Exod. 32:32). Some scholars affirm that Jesus' ministry is impregnated with the conception of the Suffering Servant of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah.<sup>9</sup> Deeply imbedded as these ideas are in the synoptic tradition, we cannot be certain that they originated in the self-consciousness of Jesus and are not the product of the interpretation of the first Christian community (cf. Col. 2:15). But are not these beliefs even the more valid as the products of the interpretation of the first Christian community in triumph over mortal danger and moral and spiritual crisis? Of this it seems certain, this final act of dedication symbolized to the early Christian community Jesus offering himself to bring the new life of the Kingdom to believers.<sup>10</sup>

Not only in the symbolism of the Last Supper, but in the synoptic record of Jesus' activity and teaching, he not only predicts new life in the Kingdom for the future, but himself embodies it and brings it in its incipency to his disciples. "He revealed and exemplified its law; he exercised its powers; he enjoyed that communion with God, in which its members would participate."<sup>11</sup> To follow Jesus meant to belong to the Kingdom. Absolute loyalty to him who embodied the Kingdom implied absolute loyalty to the Kingdom and the God whose it was (Mark 8:34ff., 10:21). We may be justified in inferring that Jesus' own absolute commitment leading to his intimate communion with God brought him to this conviction: he himself was the chosen medium by which intimate communion with God was made possible to others.<sup>12</sup> Jesus

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Otto, R., *Reich Gottes und Menschensohn*, p. 208f; and Scott, E., *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, Chas. Scribner's Sons, p. 221; contr. Burkitt, C. F., *Christian Beginnings*, London, 1924, p. 39.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Schmidt, K. L., in G. Kittel's *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Band I, Lieferung 9-10, p. 591. Luke 10:22-24; 11:19-20 and parallels.

<sup>11</sup> Scott, E. F., *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, p. 156.

<sup>12</sup> Mark 1:11; 2:1-12; 3:34; 10:21b; Matt. 17:17-20.

in this role (*persona*) thus came to be regarded as the revelation of the divine life of God to men (cf. John 1:14), and his own communion with God was to be the kind of ultimate communion which the members of the Kingdom were to have with God through him and with one another (cf. John 17:21). The exclusive claims of Jesus in the synoptic record for revealing the Father to his disciples becomes clearer (Luke 10:21-24 and parallels). Jesus reveals God because he brings men face to face with God in his own person. Because he himself does the will of God, he can call upon others to follow him through repentance and commitment.

For believers down the ages, Jesus, bringer of fellowship in the Kingdom of God, has become truly Emmanuel, "God with us," the Christ, in the highest sense of the term. And this intimate and vital communion between believers and God through Jesus has been at its best the means of a new and vital intimacy of believers with one another and mankind at large. The dead impersonal has become charged with personal vitality, explosive with divine possibilities. The collective differences of men and nations find their mutual identity in struggling, wayward, or repentant, hopeful children of God. As mediator of man to God, and man to man, Jesus has become the touchstone of world community, giving reality to "the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man." But the realization of this ideal, on however small or large a scale, has been offered only on his condition, i.e., absolute trust and commitment to God and the totality of good in behalf of oneself and in relation to one's fellows.

The first Assembly of the World Council of Churches has met at Amsterdam at a time when many conditions reminiscent of those confronted by the first Christian community prevail. The record of this Assembly has indicated that not in the attempts at agreement on forms and symbols of communion can a united Christendom be achieved, but in the recapture of the spiritual experiences and realities out of which the symbols have emerged. Such a renewal, we believe, would lead to a revival of faith and the strengthening of the Christian front throughout the world.

# Godlie Ballates of Scotland

LOIS JEYNES DENNY

## I

IF EVER IN DANGER of picturing the Scottish churchman as a dour, cheerless fellow, a backward look at Christian progress in that land of Columba and Knox will help set one's thinking straight. Bleak, sorrowful days aplenty there are in that record, but it is astonishing how many a life has been carried to heroic fulfillment on wings of song.

Perhaps one should say on "wings of psalm," for out of the mists of the legendary past appears the miraculous efficacy of psalm-singing. There is St. Ninian, whose chanting of psalms kept him perfectly dry as he walked through the forest during a deluge; and St. Patrick, whose pursuing enemies were confused and fled upon hearing his psalm-singing; and St. Mungo, whose morning devotions included reciting the Psalter as he stood breast-high in a running stream. Then there are St. Finian and St. Columba who separated because of a psalm manuscript; after Columba's laboring for years to make a copy of the Psalter, working by night with no light but that which streamed from his hand, Finian claimed the work of his pupil. Columba, denied the fruit of his toilsome labor, went to preach in Iona and all of Scotland, at last ending his mission with a psalm on his lips.

Through the Middle Ages the revered monks lived and died to the rhythm of the Psalms, and far-reaching also must have been the influence of such great psalm-loving leaders as King David, of the twelfth century, and William Wallace, patriotic martyr in the early fourteenth century.

When, with the coming of the Reformation, leaders were seeking a new service of worship to replace the ritual of Rome, they could not avoid being moved by the lingering echoes of psalms sung by saints and monks and patriots. Then began a new psalm-singing era with one vital change; Latin was discarded, for now the common man as well as

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the learned was to sing. Metrical translations into the vernacular made congregational singing possible, and very early a Scottish Psalter appeared, *The Dundee Psalms, or the Gude and Godlie Ballates*. The earliest complete copy of a Scottish Psalter now in existence is *Ane Compendious Buik of Godlie Sangis*, 1578, of which much is ascribed to John and Robert Wedderburn, graduates of Edinburgh, men of strong character and of stormy careers.

From 1564 on, each Assembly of the Church of Scotland endorsed a Psalter. In use today, with little change, is the 1650 Psalter, loved by Walter Scott and many another for its long and romantic associations.

Proposals to sanction hymns other than psalms for church worship were repeatedly disapproved by the Assembly, although as early as 1697 Simpson's *Spiritual Sangis* were recommended for private use. Only in 1854 did the church allow the inclusion of a few hymns in the *Hymnary*. This number rapidly increased from the original twenty-five to the present number, over seven hundred.

## II

Two essential facts should be noted regarding Scottish hymns: their very recent introduction into the church service, and their relation to hymn literature in general.

There were definite reasons for the postponement of their use in church. The Protestantism of Scotland was essentially Calvinistic. Calvin's standard, "the Bible only," had become a precedent which, like many another religious precedent, had hardened into a stony dogma against which many persons struggled in vain. The orthodox view was that the Psalms were "inspired" and that it was not fitting that inspired songs should be replaced, or even supplemented, by merely humanly composed hymns.

Furthermore, psalm-singing had come to be considered the most divine part of the service of worship. The psalm-reading, and the first and second lessons, might be heard with covered heads; but as the psalm was sung, the congregation rose and every head was uncovered.

Isaac Watts, an Independent English minister, did much to pre-dispose the churches toward hymns. In 1707 he wrote a volume of original hymns introduced by an "Essay Towards the Improvement of Christian Psalmody." He contended that the Bible was God's word *to us*. Hymns should not be a mere repetition of that message, but

should be *our response* to it. He also emphasized the fact that the psalms were Jewish, not Christian, literature, and he dared to point out unchristian ideals in some of them. He also marked the fallacy of believing that modern metrical translations were true renderings of ancient poetry.

His scholarly arguments may have passed over the heads of most of his contemporaries, but his songs, set to ballad meter and often to old familiar tunes, became favorites. The love of singing the gospel hymns outweighed any duty of singing the psalms—except with official organized religion. The psalms were ever the same; hymns were constantly being freshened by changes in Christian attitudes. When at last the church sanctioned hymn-singing, the era of psalms soon gave place to an era of hymns.

Most of the hymns mentioned below are now the common property of the various Protestant churches. Comparisons of modern hymnals will show some variations in wording, punctuation, and verses included or omitted; but the hymn texts, as given, are taken from several different hymnals to suggest their widespread acceptance.

### III

The earliest Scottish hymn which is still in common use today is "All People That On Earth Do Dwell." It was written by William Kethe (1510-1594), a "Scotch divine, no unready rhymers," an exile to Geneva during the years when freedom of thought was struggling for its existence. "All People Y<sup>e</sup>," really a paraphrase of Psalm 100, was first printed in the Genevan Psalter of 1561. "That grand old Puritan anthem" was carried to America, and its singing is always a part of the inauguration ceremonies at Harvard.

#### PSALM ONE HUNDRED

All people that on earth do dwell,  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;  
Him serve with fear, his praise forth tell,  
Come ye before him and rejoice.

Know that the Lord is God indeed,  
Without our aid he did us make,  
We are his flock, he doth us feed,  
And for his sheep he doth us take.

O enter then his gates with praise,  
Approach with joy his courts unto;

Praise, laud, and bless his name always,  
For it is seemly so to do.

For why? The Lord our God is good,  
His mercy is forever true;  
His truth at all times firmly stood,  
And shall from age to age endure.<sup>1</sup>

Another Psalm (104) which Kethe translated, was reset by Sir Robert Grant and became "O Worship the King." Kethe's began:

My soul praise the Lord  
Speak good of his Name;  
O Lord our great God  
How doest thou appeare,  
So passing in glorie,  
That great is thy fame,  
Honor and majestie,  
In thee shine most clear.

Sir Robert Grant (1785-1838), prominent in both political and literary circles, at one time Governor of Bombay, wrote many hymns; this one, written in the same meter, but less quaint and more ornate than Kethe's, is his chief claim to remembrance.

O worship the King, all glorious above!  
O gratefully sing his power and his love!  
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of days,  
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.  
O tell of his might! O sing of his grace!  
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.  
His chariots of wrath the deep thunder-clouds form,  
And dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

The earth, with its store of wonders untold,  
Almighty, thy power hath founded of old,  
Hath 'stablished it fast by a changeless decree,  
And round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea.

Thy bountiful care, what tongue can recite?  
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light,  
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,  
And sweetly distils in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,  
In thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail;  
Thy mercies how tender! how firm to the end!  
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend!

<sup>1</sup> Hymn 1, *The Hymnal* (Presbyterian).

O measureless Might! ineffable Love!  
 While angels delight to hymn thee above,  
 The humbler creation, though feeble their lays,  
 With true adoration shall sing to thy praise.<sup>2</sup>

James Montgomery (1771-1854), born at Irvine in Ayrshire, a clergyman and a very versatile man, at various times in his life was salesman, auctioneer, bookseller, editor, and poet. Twice he was put in jail while an editor; once for reprinting "A Song in Commemoration of the Fall of the Bastille," and once for printing an account of a riot. He had a poet's insight as well as an ear for rhythm, was deeply devotional and knew the Scripture well. His religious views were as broad as his experiences. Of the four hundred hymns ascribed to him many are still in use and are as colorful as his life.

"Angels From The Realms Of Glory" appeared first in his newspaper, *Iris*.

Angels, from the realms of glory,  
 Wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
 Ye who sang creation's story,  
 Now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
 Come and worship, come and worship,  
 Worship Christ, the new-born King.

Shepherds, in the fields abiding,  
 Watching o'er your flocks by night,  
 God with man is now residing,  
 Yonder shines the infant Light:  
 Come and worship, come and worship,  
 Worship Christ, the new-born King.

Sages, leave your contemplations,  
 Brighter visions beam afar;  
 Seek the great Desire of nations,  
 Ye have seen his natal star:  
 Come and worship, come and worship,  
 Worship Christ, the new-born King.

Saints before the altar bending,  
 Watching long in hope and fear,  
 Suddenly the Lord, descending,  
 In his temple shall appear:  
 Come and worship, come and worship,  
 Worship Christ, the new-born King.<sup>3</sup>

The second phrase of his much-loved "In The Hour Of Trial" never quite satisfied the critical Montgomery. In the margin of his

<sup>2</sup> Hymn 255, *The Hymnal* (Episcopal).

<sup>3</sup> Hymn 108, *The Pilgrim Hymnal* (Congregational Christian).

copy we find written "stand by" and "pray for" and "help thou" as suggested alternatives.

In the hour of trial,  
 Jesus, plead for me;  
 Lest by base denial  
 I depart from thee:  
 When thou seest me waver,  
 With a look recall,  
 Nor for fear or favor  
 Suffer me to fall.

With its witching pleasures  
 Would this vain world charm;  
 Or its sordid treasures  
 Spread to work me harm;  
 Bring to my remembrance  
 Sad Gethsemane,  
 Or, in darker semblance,  
 Cross-crowned Calvary.

Should thy mercy send me  
 Sorrow, toil, and woe;  
 Or should pain attend me  
 On my path below;  
 Grant that I may never  
 Fail thy hand to see;  
 Grant that I may ever  
 Cast my care on thee.

When in dust and ashes,  
 To the grave I sink,  
 While heaven's glory flashes  
 O'er the shelving brink,  
 On thy truth relying,  
 Through that mortal strife,  
 Jesus, take me, dying,  
 To eternal life.<sup>4</sup>

Montgomery's "Songs Of Praise The Angels Sang," written during the days of hottest controversy over "inspired songs," may have been intended as an argument for modern hymn-singing; but it has survived as a beautiful song, particularly when sung to Handel's "Innocents."

Songs of praise the angels sang,  
 Heaven with halleluiahs rang,  
 When Jehovah's work begun,  
 When he spake, and it was done.

<sup>4</sup> Hymn 255, *The Hymnal* (Presbyterian).

Songs of praise awoke the morn,  
When the Prince of Peace was born;  
Songs of praise arose, when he  
Captive led captivity.

Heaven and earth must pass away;  
Songs of praise shall crown that day:  
God will make new heavens and earth;  
Songs of praise shall hail their birth.

And shall man alone be dumb,  
Till that glorious kingdom come?  
No; the church delights to raise  
Psalms, and hymns, and songs of praise.

Saints below with heart and voice,  
Still in songs of praise rejoice;  
Learning here by faith and love,  
Songs of praise to sing above.

Borne upon their latest breath,  
Songs of praise shall conquer death;  
Then, amidst eternal joy,  
Songs of praise their powers employ.<sup>5</sup>

The nineteenth century was a time of accelerated religious interest everywhere. In Scotland we find many hymn-writers, the best remembered ones all seeming to be closely connected with Edinburgh, either the town or the University or both.

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889), prince of Scottish hymnologists, was of sturdy Scotch ancestry, a graduate of Edinburgh, and a very active preacher. His intensely personal poems were usually in a rather plaintive, wistful style; "I Heard The Voice Of Jesus Say" is typically a Bonar production.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Come unto me and rest;  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
Thy head upon my breast."  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
Weary and worn and sad;  
I found in him a resting place,  
And he has made me glad.  
  
I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Behold I freely give  
The living water; thirsty one,  
Stoop down, and drink, and live."

<sup>5</sup> Hymn 256, *The Hymnal* (Episcopal).

I came to Jesus, and I drank  
 Of that life-giving stream;  
 My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
 And now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
 "I am this dark world's light;  
 Look unto me, thy morn shall rise,  
 And all thy day be bright."  
 I looked to Jesus, and I found  
 In him my star, my sun;  
 And in that light of life I'll walk,  
 Till traveling days are done.<sup>6</sup>

As a young student pastor, one of Bonar's duties was to lead the children's singing. His first hymns, which he later published as *The Book Of Praise For Children*, were written to give the children something easier and more suitable for them to sing. One of these children's hymns is "The Fields Are All White." His first song for adults was "Go Labor On."

Go, labor on! spend and be spent,  
 Thy joy to do the Father's will!  
 It is the way the Master went;  
 Should not the servant tread it still?

Go, labor on! 'tis not for naught,  
 Thine earthly loss is heavenly gain.  
 Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee not;  
 The Master praises—what are men?

Go, labor on! enough while here  
 If he shall praise thee, if he deign  
 Thy willing heart to mark and cheer;  
 No toil for him shall be in vain.

Toil on, faint not, keep watch and pray;  
 Be wise the erring soul to win;  
 Go forth into the world's highway,  
 Compel the wanderer to come in.

Toil on, and in thy toil rejoice;  
 For toil comes rest, for exile home;  
 Soon shalt thou hear the Bridegroom's voice,  
 The midnight peal, "Behold, I come!"<sup>7</sup>

Elizabeth Clephane (1830-1869), born in Edinburgh, a daughter of the Sheriff of Fife, was a frail girl and a voracious reader. *Breath-*

<sup>6</sup> Hymn 210, *The Methodist Hymnal*.

<sup>7</sup> Hymn 388, *The Pilgrim Hymnal*.

*ings on the Border* was a collection of her poems in which "Beneath The Cross Of Jesus" appeared.

Beneath the cross of Jesus  
 I fain would take my stand,  
 The shadow of a mighty rock  
 Within a weary land;  
 A home within the wilderness,  
 A rest upon the way,  
 From the burning of the noon-tide heat,  
 And the burden of the day.

Upon that cross of Jesus  
 Mine eye at times can see  
 The very dying form of One  
 Who suffered there for me;  
 And from my smitten heart with tears  
 Two wonders I confess:  
 The wonders of his glorious love,  
 And my unworthiness.

I take, O cross, thy shadow  
 For my abiding place;  
 I ask no other sunshine than  
 The sunshine of his face;  
 Content to let the world go by,  
 To know no gain nor loss,  
 My sinful self my only shame,  
 My glory all the cross.<sup>8</sup>

Another hymn by Miss Clephane, a hymn not so commonly used now as in the golden age of evangelism, may have been inspired by an experience in the Pentland Hills. When the great singing evangelist, Sankey, heard this poem, it is said that he sat down immediately at his portable organ and improvised a tune dramatically fitting for the words. The first verse of this hymn runs:

There were ninety and nine that safely lay  
 In the shelter of the fold;  
 But one was out on the hills away,  
 Far off from the gates of gold;  
 Away on the mountains wild and bare,  
 Away from the tender Shepherd's care.<sup>9</sup>

One of the most learned and influential ministers in Scotland during the last century was Norman MacLeod (1821-1872). He studied at Edinburgh, at Glasgow, and in Germany. For several years he was

<sup>8</sup> Hymn 110, *The New Baptist Hymnal*.

<sup>9</sup> Hymn 247, *The Methodist Hymnal*.

Moderator of the General Assembly. "Courage, Brother! Do Not Stumble," a challenge to strength and confidence, is one of his best-known hymns.

Courage, brother, do not stumble,  
Though thy path be dark as night;  
There's a star to guide the humble,  
Trust in God, and do the right!

Though the road be rough and dreary,  
And its end far out of sight,  
Foot it bravely, strong or weary;  
Trust in God, and do the right!

Perish policy and cunning,  
Perish all that fears the light!  
Whether losing, whether winning,  
Trust in God, and do the right!

Some will hate thee, some will love thee,  
Some will flatter, some will slight:  
Cease from man, and look above thee,  
Trust in God, and do the right! <sup>10</sup>

Another Edinburgh man with a poetic imagination was James D. Burns (1823-1864). He, too, was a clergyman, but some of the time was unable to have a charge because of ill health. He wrote a number of hymns, all of which reflect a delicacy and tenderness of feeling, such as we see in the following:

Hushed was the evening hymn,  
The temple courts were dark,  
The lamp was burning dim  
Before the sacred ark;  
When suddenly a voice divine  
Rang through the silence of the shrine.

The old man, meek and mild,  
The priest of Israel, slept;  
His watch the temple child,  
The little Levite, kept;  
And what from Eli's sense was sealed,  
The Lord to Hannah's son revealed.

O give me Samuel's ear:  
The open ear, O Lord,  
Alive and quick to hear  
Each whisper of thy word!  
Like him to answer at thy call,  
And to obey thee first of all!

<sup>10</sup> Hymn 298, *The Methodist Hymnal*.

O give me Samuel's heart,  
 A lowly heart, that waits  
 Where in thy house thou art,  
 Or watches at thy gates,  
 By day and night, a heart that still  
 Moves at the breathing of thy will.

O give me Samuel's mind:  
 A sweet, un murmuring faith,  
 Obedient and resigned  
 To thee in life and death!  
 That I may read with childlike eyes  
 Truths that are hidden from the wise.<sup>11</sup>

George Matheson (1842-1906) has a most interesting personality. Although deprived of his eyesight in youth, he achieved a brilliant record at Edinburgh University. He wrote "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go" one summer evening in 1882 at the manse in Inellen. It is often interpreted as having special reference to his blindness. Mr. Matheson himself wrote that the poem, the "fruit of pain," was written very rapidly—in a few minutes—after suffering severe mental distress. It was the favorite hymn of King George V.

O Love that wilt not let me go,  
 I rest—my weary soul in thee;  
 I give thee back the life I owe,  
 That in thine ocean depths its flow  
 May richer, fuller be.

O Light that followest all my way,  
 I yield my flick'ring torch to thee;  
 My heart restores its borrowed ray,  
 That in thy sunshine's blaze its day  
 May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,  
 I cannot close my heart to thee;  
 I trace the rainbow thro' the rain,  
 And feel the promise is not vain  
 That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,  
 I dare not ask to fly from thee;  
 I lay in dust life's glory dead,  
 And from the ground there blossoms red  
 Life that shall endless be.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Hymn 492, *The Pilgrim Hymnal*.

<sup>12</sup> Hymn 232, *The Baptist Hymnal*.

A less well known but beautiful hymn-poem is "Upon The Hills The Wind Is Bleak And Cold." It came from the pen of Sir John Skelton (1831-1897), another Edinburgh graduate, and a lawyer of the Faculty of Advocates. This hymn seems to be peculiarly Scottish in its pictures and was probably suggested by the old Scottish proverb, "The e'ening brings a' hame."

Upon the hills the wind is bleak and cold,  
The sweet young grasses wither on the wold,  
And we, O Lord, have wandered from the fold;  
But evening brings us home.

We have been wounded by the hunter's darts,  
Our eyes are very heavy, and our hearts  
Search for thy coming, when the light departs;  
At evening bring us home.

The darkness gathers; through the gloom no star  
Rises to guide us; we have wandered far;  
Without thy lamp we know not where we are;  
At evening bring us home.

We fare bewildered through the falling snow;  
O thou dear Shepherd, leave us not to go  
Without thy heartening voice, thy guiding glow;  
At evening bring us home.<sup>18</sup>

Two hymns which the author never intended for congregational singing have found their way into the latest Scottish *Hymnary* (1927). These are Sir Walter Scott's condensed rendering of *Dies Irae*, found near the end of *The Lay Of The Last Minstrel*, and the hymn of Rebecca in *Ivanhoe*, "When Israel Of The Lord Beloved."

#### IV

Any picture of Scottish hymnology would be incomplete without noting the musical accompaniment to the sacred verse. The Presbyterians early discarded all choirs, organs, and instruments of any kind whatever as "popish practices," "superstitious monuments."

In 1573 at Aberdeen the Privy Council, in accordance with prevailing sentiment, declared: "The organis, with all expeditioun be removed the kirk, and maid profite of, to the use and support of the puir." The organs were therefore usually sold intact to private persons, rather than being destroyed and sold as junk. It is recorded that in 1727 the

<sup>18</sup> Hymn 633, *The Pilgrim Hymnal*.

only organ in all of Scotland was in the Episcopal Church at Aberdeen.

By 1807 there was some agitation for instrumental music again and the Presbytery of Glasgow considered an organ, but decided it unlawful to buy it. However, in other churches the question arose, and by 1828 the Aberdeen congregation had acquired an organ. It is of interest to note that the first Presbyterian churches to use organs were not in Scotland, but abroad—in Jamaica and Calcutta.

It was 1866 before the Established Church of Scotland officially authorized organ use; the other branches of Presbyterians deferred their sanction still longer, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church still bans both organs and choirs.

Since the singing in Presbyterian churches had no assistance from choir nor organ, the first tunes to which the Psalms were sung were necessarily very simple. Little is known beyond the names of the old familiar secular melodies which were adapted to psalm-singing. *The Gude and Godlie Ballates* notes such airs as "John Cum Kiss Me Now," "Under The Greenwood Tree," and "The Hunt Is Up"—all "converted from profane into religious poetry."

There were only a few tunes in comparison to the number of psalms to be sung, so one tune was used for many sets of words. The meter of each psalm and tune was designated as C.M., L.M., and so forth, to make it easy to match the psalm to a tune of like meter.

When a new hymn was introduced to a congregation, it was "lined out" by a leader, time after time, until it became familiar. In Scotland this was continued into the last century, both because of scarcity of hymn-books and illiteracy of the congregation. Psalm-singing usually began with a long initial note, aiming at dignified rendition; a pause was made at the end of each line, even though the score called for none, partly a result of the lining-out method of learning. The Scottish *Hymnary* follows the old custom of using half-notes where an American has quarter-notes; it also often doubles the initial note; and almost invariably carries the suggestion "slow" or "moderately slow."

At first all hymns were sung in unison, the leader (often the parish clerk) setting the pitch. At the end of the sixteenth century, however, four-part harmonies were introduced; and in the seventeenth century the "rapport," a fugal type of tune, was introduced. We read that in John Knox's time, Durie, a supporter of his, who was returning from temporary banishment, was welcomed by two thousand people singing Psalm 124

to "a pleasant tune in four parts, known to most of the people," "a great sound and majestic."

## V

Any one who studies the history or literature of Scotland must be impressed with the powerful influence the Psalms have had in the lives of both great and common folk. In 1830, Alexander Duff, first Scottish Presbyterian missionary, shipwrecked near the Cape of Good Hope, considered it a divine message to him when his Bible and Psalter were washed up on the beach, sole remnants saved from his large library. Duff's long, sacrificial life was his response to that message.

Wishart, burned for heresy in 1546, recited a psalm before kissing his executioner as a sign of forgiveness, and so inspired John Knox to that inflexible determination and fiery eloquence which made him the successful champion of freedom of worship in Scotland.

Story after story could be told of the psalm-loving Scots, the psalm-singing Scots. The study of their music is inseparable from the study of their philosophy which reflects a sacrificial devotion to principles, an honest simplicity linked with a warm enthusiasm. The descendants of the Scottish tradition may well rejoice in their heritage.

## "What Lutherans Are Thinking"

JOSEPH SITTLER, JR.

IN 1947 THERE WAS PUBLISHED by The Wartburg Press a volume of essays, *What Lutherans Are Thinking*. The work was edited by Professor E. C. Fendt of the faculty of the Theological Seminary of the American Lutheran Church in Columbus, Ohio. The volume had its inception in the first free conference of Lutheran theological professors in the United States and Canada, in 1943. The conference proposed ". . . the publication of a volume on Lutheran faith and life which could serve as an introduction to the various fields of theological study." The twenty-eight contributors represent virtually all of the Lutheran general bodies in North America.

Discussion of the content of the book may well be preceded by a comment on the significance of the book as a Lutheran event. The enterprise is at least as significant as the product. *That* this thing has been done, in other words, shares importance with *what* has been done. Until about thirty years ago the various groups of Lutherans in America did almost nothing in common. Popular historical judgment has been quick to explain this fact on the ground of a particularly virulent manifestation of blockheadedness, supposed to be characteristic of Lutherans! That Lutherans are inclined to be blockheaded is not a very informative statement apart from careful scrutiny of the points at issue in each case. It would, moreover, be historically irresponsible to assign to psychological or even theological traits facts which have clear historical bases.

Lutheran beginnings in America were effected by groups representing the multiple churches of Europe which grew out of the Reformation. These groups, in the new world, were at first very closely tied to the mother churches abroad; and as late as the second half of the nineteenth century were, in part, supplied with clergymen from the home institutions. Here, in the new world, they addressed themselves to the planting of the church and to the nurture of faith among the many immigrant peoples who came here. They were widely dispersed, absorbed in the

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arduous labor of establishing parishes and institutions, and devoted to the hard task of transmitting faith and order in a constantly fluid frontier situation.

These and other factors must be weighed if one would understand how it came about that the cultivation of a general Lutheran consciousness among Lutherans has been so long deferred. Barriers of language, barriers of distance, different forms of polity and liturgy tend to create parochialism. And parochialism breeds suspicion. That the various Lutheran bodies in America have been mutually suspicious is a fact, and there is no point in denying it. The present volume testifies to the relatively rapid rate at which that venerable isolation is being overcome; and this testimony might properly be remarked as the most immediately significant fact about the book.

Corollary to the above is the second notable fact: that the several statements in the volume (with certain glaring exceptions) have been formulated from within an involvement with the theological labors of the general Protestant community. This fact becomes of deeper significance when one recalls the almost complete parochialism of Lutheran writings of only a few decades ago. Lutheran theologians took in each other's washing to an astonishing degree. Extra-Lutheran works were certainly known; but a strange suspicion of anything not clearly labeled worked to inhibit acknowledgment of them, much less positive criticism. Even a cursory survey of the essays will impress the reader with the extent to which these statements are fashioned in the light of recent Protestant thought. The influence of general Protestant scholarship in shaping the theological method, the form, and the very vocabulary of the statements addressed to the several concerns of theology is particularly evident in the essays dealing with biblical theology, the doctrine of God, the doctrine of man. These essays are notable not only for the evidence they afford of the degree to which modern theological literature has been brought under control, but also for the perhaps unconscious power of this literature to suggest new terms and ways for Lutheranism's enunciation of her peculiar teaching.

The volume also bears heartening witness to the re-establishment of lines of communication with European theologians of the Lutheran tradition. While it may be asserted that many individual Lutheran scholars have throughout Lutheran history in America availed themselves of the products of Lutheran theologians abroad, it certainly cannot be

claimed that Lutheran institutions of learning in America have transmitted these profound and accumulating riches to their children. Even in institutions in which German was the language of classroom instruction, until only a few years ago the mass of continental scholarship was pretty straitly strained in the process of admittance! This academic isolation is the more astonishing when one recalls the prodigious productivity of Lutheran scholars in Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark.

How did it come about that the Lutheran Church in America fell into so loose, unconcerned, and positively uncongenial a relationship with her brethren abroad? The answer to that question cannot be given briefly; the full compass of the answer is still involved in a complex of history, sociology, frontier psychology, and parochial pretensions not even clear as yet to the historians of the Lutheran Church. But certain clear *parts* of the answer may be here suggested. As the young and transplanted Lutheran churches in America fought to establish and expand their parishes along the outstretching lines of the long frontiers, certain perhaps inevitable forces operated toward an attenuation of the familiar intercourse with the mother churches: the sheer expenditure of practical-ecclesiastical energy; the elementary character of the preaching, teaching, ethical task; the very novelty of the new social and frontier-religious environment in which the church was planted; the seeming irrelevancy of the thoughts and ways of the "established" churches of Europe vis-à-vis the dynamic life in the American scene. And combined with this deepening isolation was a parallel heightening of the self-consciousness of the various Lutheran churches as these were driven inward upon themselves as dear and familiar islands within an ocean of the new and the strange. One has but to read the letters, diaries, church records of these cut-off communities of Germans, Swedes, Danes, Norwegians to realize that the parish church became for them a cultural nucleus, rich with remembered rites, traditions, associations—and above all the glad, remembered language of their fathers. But as these early Lutheran parishes began gradually to be permeated with the powerful life forces of the American national spirit, and as there came the slow but certain realization of the necessary adaptation of life and orders to the American scene, the old familiar religious, devotional, and theological utterances of the homeland began to lose their decisive power.

History may explain; it cannot recover the lost. The theological impoverishment of American Lutheranism due to loosened lines of com-

munication was not compensated by the development in America of a powerful Lutheran theological tradition, nor the maintenance of institutions to foster its growth. While, to be sure, each of the general bodies had had its great names, exalted in isolation from other bodies and from Protestantism in general, there have been none able to command the attention of the world-wide Lutheran community. The works of these men were too often addressed to a tight little community, shaped by local considerations, harassed by immediate and locally defined problems, and shaped by and for a mentality relatively unconcerned with the broader life of Protestant Christendom in its struggle with the huge forces of Western culture as these emerged from the Enlightenment and spread to determine American life in the nineteenth century.

It is now possible to understand a strange fact of American Lutheran theological history—namely, that there could be enunciated and asserted as normative for Lutheranism generally, points of view and a theological methodology which were actually characteristic of only a small sector of world-wide Lutheranism. There have been, and still are, assertions about what constitutes genuine Lutheranism which are made with pontifical solemnity and heard with unquestioning acquiescence among persons who would make these local expansions and corollaries of the great Confessions normative for genuine Lutheranism everywhere. The present volume reveals, in some of the essays, an awareness of the partial character of such locally determined theological formulations—and includes cheek by jowl other essays which seem strange to anyone whose understanding of Lutheranism has been shaped by other, and more catholic, interpretations.

The deepest significance of the volume, however, and that most rewarding to the reader concerned with the future of Lutheran witness to the gospel in this place and time, is this: that it reveals in all of its depth and difficulty the fundamental problem of Lutheranism today. That problem may be bluntly stated as follows: since the sixteenth century Lutheranism has progressively faltered in her effort to find a manner of theological discourse proper and adequate to her Reformers' understanding of the gospel. Here again, while no detailed account may be attempted, the larger facts of the Lutheran theological tragedy may be suggested. The theological structure of Reformation-Lutheranism was centrally determined by the vitality of *faith*. It was a faith-ful theology. Every theological assertion was grounded in faith; every de-

clared certainty was a creation of faith, made instrumental for the believer in the Spirit-attested Word of God. But very early in the course of post-Reformation times this organic relationship of Word—Faith—Spirit was virtually abandoned. Orthodox Lutheran theologians embarked upon that impressive, but inwardly strange, manner of theological speech which is properly called in the history of doctrine, *Lutheran Scholasticism*. This effort to contain the new and still powerfully fermenting wine of the faith-apprehended gospel in pre-Reformation bottles of propositional-logical forms can claim massive achievements. But the very impressiveness of its scholarly and systematic achievements ought no longer to blind the mother church of the Reformation to the deepening cleft between the faith-ful nature of its religious gifts and assertions, and its fundamentally rationalistic theological articulation. Reformation religious dynamism has been rather too generally reduced to a logically concatenated explication of an absolutized Bible.

This tragedy was complicated by the reactive movement which revealed it. Lutheran pietism was, and is, a profound reaction of an organism which feels itself religiously bereft by the very sterility and chill of a theological method transplanted from its proper home in medieval scholasticism and strange to the very central character of Reformation faith. Just as pietism, in its theological expression, had its roots in a pre-Reformation method already beginning to show destructive cracks one hundred and fifty years before the Reformation—so pietism, in its devotional expression, had its roots in a pre-Reformation Christ-mysticism foreign to Lutheranism's reasserted *Christus pro Nobis*. Such an immensely influential work as Arndt's *True Christianity* is a strange fusion of the late medieval mysticism of à Kempis and the new faith-vocabulary of the released gospel.

The foregoing analysis leads to this conclusion: that in the relative isolation of the Lutheran Church in America it is the post-Reformation theological tradition which has played a decisive role. Many of the essays in the volume, while cognizant of a heavy hand that represses rather than releases, are determined by its ways.

But this tragedy contains within itself a promise! For Lutheran faith and life is at long last becoming desperate about its theological pathology. A deepening sense of the noncommunicative character of scholastic Lutheran formulations in the contemporary world has created an awareness that new wine requires appropriate bottles! This rest-

lessness is not new. It has marked Lutheran religious life since the beginning of the seventeenth century. That depth-dimension in Lutheran understanding of the gospel, from which she can in no wise set herself free, has never been silent. At times when its voice has all but disappeared from classroom and pulpit, it could be heard singing its rebuke in liturgy and hymn, from choir-stall and organ bench. In the larger choral works of J. S. Bach this blend of gospel-content and strange language is dramatically tense. But there, happily, the pietistic insipidity of the text (cf. the text of the meditative arias of the Passions) has been reduced to relative insignificance by the unambiguous and majestic religious assertions of the music.

The enormous religious energy of her Reformer has persisted in Lutheranism despite the incredible lassitude of Luther studies in the American church. The writings of Luther, the catechism, the great chorales, breath a spirit, confront life with a sureness of Christian touch and depth, and speak a language which whole generations of logicians and proposition-knitters have been unable either to understand or to silence.

These essays, finally, make clear the fact that Lutheranism passionately desires to relate herself to the world of the present, and that she doesn't quite know how to go about it. A peculiarly static view of her confessions—which is related in a complex way to her static view of the Word—has worked to prevent her from breaking through to a dynamic understanding of her own confessional heritage. Confession is both a product and an activity. It is both a historically concrete witness, and a continuous witnessing activity created and formed by the Word in every moment and over against every situation. Confession is both theological house and theological sword. And there is present peril lest the very statistical success of "confessional" Lutheranism may longer defer the day when she must in her inmost heart confront and listen to the heavenly facts of Word, Scripture, and Faith, and ask after their meaning with a depth and passion comparable to that displayed by her adored, and neglected, Reformers.

These two strands of her tradition—the one regnant and rigid, the other unsung but ultimately unsilenceable—urge contemporary American Lutheranism in different ways. Her bondage to a sub-Reformation theological method condemns her, in large and influential parts, to a sub-evangelical bibliolatry. And the presently rediscovered dynamism of

Reformation freedom in the gospel urges her toward the achievement of a theological method which shall enable her to administer the genius of Reformation Christianity, to achieve a new and relevant vocabulary, and again to address the whole of Christendom as positively as she once addressed it.

That promise is alive, is real, and is gathering power. This volume may be regarded both as a testimony to the sense of responsibility on the part of Lutheran theologians in America, and as a series of first steps in unison to overcome theological embarrassments, ecclesiastical estrangements, and interchurch suspicions. For through the entire volume, sometimes articulate and sometimes incoherent by virtue of the desperate zeal with which a tired theological formulation is lashed into action—through it all is a clear and good desire to bear witness to evangelical faith for the help of men living in the enormous complexities of twentieth-century America.

## A Review of the Quarter's Fiction

JOHN C. SCHROEDER

OUR ANGRY AND TROUBLED WORLD finds its reflection in several of the novels recently published. They present varied images of human nature, some religious, some noble, and some horrible in their portrayal of our human kind.

I found *The Plague* an extraordinarily moving story whose symbolism goes deep into our human problem. The narrative itself is frightening. The seaport city of Oran on the north coast of Africa is a thriving metropolis of 200,000 people. One day Dr. Rieux finds a dead rat on the stairway of the building where his office is. He thinks little of it, even when the janitor tells him about several more he has found in the cellar. But when he is called to visit a patient whose temperature has shot up to 104, the ganglia in whose neck are painful to the touch, with horrible buboes appearing in the groin, he begins to speculate about the possibility of plague. Dead rats appear by the hundreds. The city fathers are reluctant to face the fact that the death rate is mounting. Finally they are forced by the facts to release the order and proclaim the state of plague, which cuts off the city and its inhabitants from all contact with the outside world.

The book then proceeds to describe what goes on in the minds of people as they begin to understand their plight. Dr. Rieux organizes a volunteer squad to nurse the sick. Rambert, a journalist, tries bribery so that he can escape. Only after he has been thwarted and is faced with the nature of the common peril, does he recognize his human obligation. Grand, a pathetic clerk in the municipal office, friendless and lonesome, who has been trying to answer his personal problem by writing a book on "Personality," begins to find his answer through the doctor's service. Tarrou has been a communist. Now morally and politically adrift, he sees the horrible suffering, and his conscience, touched by misery, forces him into danger only because men are suffering. He tries to learn the meaning of suffering—without God. "Each of us has the

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plague within him, no one, no one on earth is free from it. And I know, too, that we must keep endless watch on ourselves lest in a careless moment we breathe in someone's face. . . . All the rest—health, integrity, purity (if you like)—is a product of the human will, of a vigilance that must never falter . . . and it's up to us, so far as possible, not to join forces with the pestilences." M. Othon, the magistrate, who scorns human weakness since he sees so much of it in his court, is forced to learn what it is to come under the same condemnation as those whom he has judged. Dr. Rieux, an agnostic, heroically serves people only because they are pitiable. He can find no other motive than this, although it seems sufficient to maintain his devotion.

Father Paneloux has the most difficult personal problem. When the plague is first proclaimed, he preaches a sermon in which he describes it as a visitation of God upon the city. "Yes, the hour has come for serious thought. You fondly imagined it was enough to visit God on Sundays, and thus you could make free of your weekdays. You believed some brief formalities, some bendings of the knee, would recompense him well enough for your criminal indifference. But God is not mocked. These brief encounters could not sate the fierce hunger of his love. He wished to see you longer and more often; that is his manner of loving and, indeed, it is the only manner of loving. And that is why, wearied of waiting for you to come to him, he loosed on you this visitation: as he has visited all the cities that offended against him since the dawn of history."

But as the plague continues and Father Paneloux sees children die in horrible torture, he wonders whether he, too, had not better join Dr. Rieux's squad, even though he has been convinced that this was God's way of dealing with the city. His confident, moralistic dogmatism begins to waver. Now in his sermon, he no longer uses the pronoun "You," but "We." "My brothers, the love of God is a hard love. It demands total self-surrender, disdain of our human personality. And yet, it alone can reconcile us to suffering and the deaths of children, it alone can justify them, since we cannot understand them, and we can only make God's will ours." Some of his colleagues begin to wonder about his orthodoxy.

When the plague has finally been brought under control, "from the dark harbor soared the first rocket of the firework display organized by the municipality, and the town acclaimed it with a long-drawn sigh of

delight. Cottard, Tarrou, the men and women Rieux had loved and lost—all alike, dead or guilty, were forgotten. Yes, the old fellow had been right; these people were 'just the same as ever.'"

*The Plague* is written on three levels. There is the vivid photographic description of what happened; there is the moralistic speculation about human response to need; there is the symbolic suggestion of all humanity infected by a plague. It is a most absorbing story.

*The Heart of the Matter* has already produced much theological discussion. It is first-rate story-telling. The skeleton of the plot seems commonplace enough. Henry Scobie is Deputy Police Commissioner in a town on the west coast of Africa. He is conscientious, steady, and considerate of its native population. He is known by many as "the Just." His nagging, unpopular wife, whom he does not love but whom he pities and to whom he is kind, is more than usually sorry for herself when she learns that he is not to be promoted. Realizing that he can help her save face only by giving her a holiday, he borrows money from Yusef, an unscrupulous Syrian merchant. Yusef then begins to blackmail him. After Scobie's wife leaves, he meets a young woman who has been on a vessel torpedoed by a submarine and who reaches the town friendless and ill after forty days at sea in an open boat. Her young husband was drowned when the ship sank. Scobie, sorry for her and seeking to be kind, falls in love with her. The tale unfolds as the poor man becomes more and more deeply involved in a series of evils from which he cannot seem to extricate himself—smuggling, adultery, disloyalty. Eventually he sees no way out of his misery but suicide.

All this might seem like a typical suspense tale, were it not for the fact that Henry Scobie is a devout Roman Catholic. As he becomes enmeshed in these actions which his conscience cannot approve, he finds that he cannot go to confession, since he does not see how he can stop the cycle of sin. This means that he is deprived of the sacrament upon which his salvation depends. Once, because he thinks that his wife suspects him, he goes to Mass, even though he has not been to confession. He feels guilty of having betrayed the Christ. Scobie can see no way out of it but "to be damned for the glory of God" by committing suicide. After his death, his priest finally suspecting what he has done (he has made the suicide appear to be a heart attack), wonders whether he has not done it for the love of God.

This looks like an insoluble theological dilemma to Mr. Graham

Greene, who is a convert to Roman Catholicism—a just man who through pity (or a highly sentimentalized version of it) for his fellows becomes involved in sin and can save God only by damning himself. So many have discussed the book insisting that it reveals a fundamental problem in the relationship between God and man. Actually it is an ecclesiastical problem posed by a church which authoritatively controls salvation, sets up a sacramental system as the only way to achieve it, and then presents this exclusive God with an insoluble dilemma. It is like asking God to “square the circle” and then wondering about his omniscience because he cannot. The author sets up a situation in which a good man, through what seems to be no serious fault of his own, motivated by pity, is set beyond the love of God and therefore has to save God’s love by making certain of his own damnation. A God whose grace is limited by so mechanical a system of salvation is a petty God indeed. Surely he is not limited in grace by a church. Scobie is not a great man; he is a kindly, considerate, weak man. It would be a sad thing to have to believe that such were beyond the reach of God’s redemption.

*Roll Back the Sea* is a surprisingly exciting story when one considers that it is so full of technical engineering detail. Walcheren Island before the war was a rich farming region six feet below sea level, protected from the besieging sea by heavy dikes. In 1944 the Germans held it in order to block the way of the Allied armies to Antwerp. They could be dislodged only by breaking the dikes. When the R.A.F. bombed them the cattle, the farms, the gardens, and the orchards of 60,000 people were drowned. Then when the war was over, there came the problem of reclaiming the land, since the people tenaciously clung to the place their forebears had struggled so hard to create.

Andre Van Hummel, the engineer, is summoned to command the counterattack against the sea, a devil who has to be outwitted. The book tells the story of the campaign, which involves the heroic labor of so many different kinds of people who make up this army of engineers and workers. As the author says, “In Holland alone a passion for conquest still smoulders and grows with the centuries; to create land out of water—not only to defend but to assault and push back; to paint green, bit by bit, what is blue on the map. To grow grain where fish have swum; to ride horses where the monotonous waves have marched; in most Hollanders this passion remains unconscious.”

Aldous Huxley is an indignant preacher in *Ape and Essence*. If

once he was troubled about the nature of the Brave New World, now he is disgusted with our depraved new world. *Ape and Essence* is a fantasy set in the year 2018 in southern California. Dr. Alfred Poole comes with an expedition from New Zealand, one of the few places in the world not touched by atom bombs in the fourth World War. They land at what had once been Los Angeles. There he is captured by the savages who remember nothing except "The Thing." They clothe and adorn themselves by unearthing twentieth-century graves. They worship the Devil. Their priests are eunuchs. They despise women and mate with them only during an officially proclaimed mating season. Their children are deformed. Their religious liturgy is the Christian liturgy inverted. "What is the chief end of man?" "To propitiate Belial; deprecate his enmity and avoid destruction as long as possible."

Dr. Poole falls in love with Loola, charming her with Shelley, a copy of which he has found in the ruins of a library. The natives use books for fuel. Eventually, Poole and Loola escape.

*Ape and Essence* is an angry sermon against our moral deterioration. Nationalism has become idolatry; science has been perverted to ignoble ends. There is no spiritual vision. We have played the ape so long we have forgotten what the essence of our nature is. All over, ends are "ape-chosen," while "only the means are man's." Huxley contends that the tragedy of our time is that we cannot get rid of the things we have created. One wonders whether his otherworldly solution is not too easy. His satire is so heavy that it bludgeons the reader into impatience rather than into indignation. What the book does, however, is to awaken us to our deadly danger—our moral inability to handle our civilization. It is an anxious and tormented cry for spiritual vision.

*A Candle For St. Jude* is a charming little book written in Rumer Godden's limpid, direct prose. Madame Holbein is an artist, once a famous ballerina, who operates a school for the ballet and a little theater in London. She has traveled everywhere but is untouched by the world, living only within the excitements of her art. Her pupils include a variety of types: Hilda French, who has a touch of genius; Felix, whose music gives him an appreciation of the dancer's art; Lion, once a street gamin whom Madame has made into a dancer; they, with so many others who live only in the world of the ballet. As a foil to Madame's careless rapture is Miss Ilse, practical and this-worldly, who keeps the books and escapes the uncertainties of Madame's temperament by running

across the street to the church where she lights candles to St. Jude, the saint who keeps people out of trouble. Whether it is St. Jude or Madame's love of the art, which finally saves a difficult dramatic situation, is hard to discover. The gentle story and the graceful prose make this thin volume entrancing.

Ellin Berlin knows about the "*Lace Curtain Irish*." The Reardon family, whose forebears were "Shanty Irish," have made money. The father is a confident, aggressive blusterer, the mother a pious sentimentalist, and the children are typical urban sophisticates. The story is Veronica's. Her education in a convent, her discovery of a prevailing Protestant environment and her resentment of it, her marriage to Jamie Stair and all the difficulties which religious intermarriage brings, are honestly and convincingly portrayed. Implicit in Veronica's belief is a common misapprehension—that the Catholic is religious and the Protestant is not, and as a consequence the Protestant cannot understand the mystery of the Catholic's faith. Jamie has more integrity than Veronica. He capitulates to her demands, not because he lacks convictions but because he believes the marriage more important. Mrs. Berlin seems to come to the conclusion that such marriages are not successful. One can understand how the Reardon family would resent the smug snobberies of their plutocratic Protestant acquaintances. But they cannot see that honest disagreement with the church's position is not bigotry.

*No Bugles Tonight* is a story of the Civil War in the cloak-and-dagger tradition. Its historical background is good history; its hero, a politically ambitious young man who finally discovers that the Union cause is just and becomes a spy in the South during the war; its heroine a southern woman, who is a spy for the northern armies. This is a good historical romance, just the thing for a hot night when one is too tired to sleep.

**The Plague.** By ALBERT CAMUS. Translated by Stuart Gilbert. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. pp. 278. \$3.00.

**The Heart of the Matter.** By GRAHAM GREENE. New York: The Viking Press. pp. 306. \$3.00.

**Roll Back the Sea.** By A. DEN DOOLARD. Translated by Barrows Mussey. New York: Simon and Schuster. pp. 435. \$2.95.

**Ape and Essence.** By ALDOUS HUXLEY. New York: Harper & Brothers. pp. 205. \$2.50.

**A Candle For St. Jude.** By RUMER GODDEN. New York: The Viking Press.  
pp. 252. \$2.75.

**Lace Curtain.** By ELLIN BERLIN. New York: Doubleday and Company.  
pp. 375. \$3.00.

**No Bugles Tonight.** By BRUCE LANCASTER. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.  
pp. 325. \$3.00.

## Book Reviews

**Witness to the Truth.** By EDITH HAMILTON. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1948. pp. 230. \$3.00.

It is possible that the best review of this book would be the quoting of beautiful and significant sentences from it. For it is a beautiful book written with simplicity and insight. Its author is a free soul unfettered by the conventional emphases that so often serve to becloud rather than to clarify truth.

The author has studied the Gospels intently, she recognizes the inevitability of added interpretation by their editors, but never becomes bogged down by details. Nearly half of the book is devoted directly or indirectly to the Gospels, how they were written, how they became the Word of God, and the characteristics of each. A quarter of the space is allotted to brief chapters on Socrates, Christ, and Paul. Chapters on "The Failure of the Church," "Faith," and "The Way of Christ" conclude this simple but penetrating study. One rejoices that the enviable reputation of the author will assure a wide audience for the book.

Many questions arise in the mind of the student of the New Testament who has been trained in the techniques of New Testament research. For better or for worse that training does not conduce to oversimplification. There may even be a bit of envy for some of the simplicities of her interpretation. Much ink has been spilled on Jesus' view of the imminence of the end of the world. The answer here is starkly simple: "The Sermon on the Mount would be irrelevant in a world that was on the point of coming to an end." The reviewer, thanks to F. C. Grant and H. J. Cadbury, cannot feel as certain about the traditional authorship of Mark and Luke as the author does. But many scholars have accepted the traditional ascriptions.

The section on the Gospel of John begins with a delightful little character sketch of Peter, ending with "Such was the disciple who was largely responsible for the first three Gospels." The Gospel of John had another source than the simple and objective Peter. "Whoever he was he had his own special knowledge of Christ, either at first hand or through someone who had lived with Christ, listened to words he spoke unheeded by others, and meditated long upon them." The reviewer has to reject this sentence: "Most fortunately for our knowledge of Christ, the Gospel of John depends only a little upon Mark." The author is clearly aware of the many differences between the Johannine and the Synoptic teaching, aware also of the changed world, the intellectual climate in which this author operated, especially the docetic views which removed Christ far from earth. And yet, in the absence of the possibility of reconciling the Sermon on the Mount and John 14:17, the author follows the beaten track of harmonization. The Johannine account was from the day when Christ realized that the Kingdom of God was not at hand. This seems like special pleading. The author never sees what, to the reviewer, is the most fundamental fact about this Gospel, its *complete transformation of the Gospel of Christ*.

Using the quotation method in one chapter and presenting it in one paragraph, we find this picture of Christ: "He challenged men's dearest beliefs and most cherished institutions. He made demands that would have stripped the world bare of all it liked best. A requirement, the most drastic there could be: Life

lived no longer for self. A complete surrender to the service, to the will of God. The immense body of theological pronouncements does not find any support in his sayings. Christ said anyone in trouble becomes your neighbor. He said at the last judgment men would be judged solely on the basis of how they had treated others. Not one word about their belief, only how they had acted to the unfortunate. This was outrageous doctrine to men who had the fortifying consciousness of impeccably correct belief. He did not want what we want, he valued not at all what we value. The common people still heard him gladly, but the other, the important men, the responsible pillars of society and church, were outdone with his ideas. They would upset everything, patriotism, property, church and home. Perhaps they understood him better than his disciples did. No one was ever so alone. So they crucified him."

Limitations of space forbid more than mention of the delightful chapter on Socrates and these poignant sentences: "Like Christ he lived his truth and died for it. A life can be more lasting than systems of thought. Socrates has outlasted two millenniums."

The chapter on Paul raises some questions in the reviewer's mind. True, "the evangelists got no help from Paul, he turned away from memories of that life." But when the church turned to the cult of the miraculous, it did have some encouragement from Paul. He claimed miracles as a part of his own apostolic credentials (II Cor. 12:12). And compared with his contemporary, Philo of Alexandria, Paul made scant use of allegory. But in common with his contemporaries he did use the Old Testament as an arsenal of proof-texts. Paul's relation to Stoicism seems slight. There is so little in his letters to substantiate the claim and so much that militates against it. Paul's speeches in Acts must be checked against the primary sources. The Stoic had a broader view of brotherhood than did Paul. Men were brothers by virtue of their common participation in the divine reason, "fragments of God" as Epictetus put it. To Paul men were brothers by virtue of their participation in the Spirit of God, Christ, Holy Spirit, but this was not part of their natural endowment as men. Rather it was the badge of the Christian, obtained in various ways. Paul had no high regard for human nature until it was regenerated by the Spirit. He has always been the stand-by of the orthodox at this point. One of the mysteries of life to this reviewer is the theologians' insistence on the primacy of Paul (and hence of Luther and Calvin) over Jesus on this important point. "In spite of Paul's notable powers of mind and heart he could not see what he had done to God," strikes a responsive chord, and so does "Paul's worst has been given importance over his best."

Every lover of the church should read the chapter, "The Failure of the Church" and ponder thereon. "The great Church of Christ came into being by ignoring Christ" and "She turned faith without which there is no religion into something which had no connection with faith."

The major trouble with reviewing this book is that there is so much that has to be omitted: the paradoxes, the incisive insights, the pungent expression of age-old truth. It is itself a great *witness to the truth*. "No truth has been proved more conclusively through nearly two thousand years of history than that Christ lived on and still lives today. He is the assurance that his way leads to life, in the kingdom of God which will never end."

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**The Religion of Maturity.** By JOHN WICK BOWMAN. New York: The Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948. pp. 336. \$3.00.

This volume is a co-winner of the Abingdon-Cokesbury Award for 1948. As one of the judges for that award, the reviewer may well confess his high opinion of its worth. In recommending the selection, he wrote: "In my judgment, this is a work of first importance. . . . Because of the cruciality of the issues to which it is directed, because of the patent competence of the author, and because of the positive character of his conclusions, this book should constitute a landmark in contemporary theology. . . . In terms of breadth and depth of learning exhibited, grace of presentation, and both soundness and importance of conclusions, it is well worthy of the award."

At the outset, it should be said that the title is somewhat misleading and unfortunate. It suggests another in the unending sequence of "reinterpretations" of faith accommodated to contemporary canons of thought, so brilliantly inaugurated by George A. Coe's "The Religion of a Mature Mind." It offers something much more difficult of achievement, more fundamental and more valuable. Thus, the title may lure some readers to disappointment and, more serious, may fail to claim the attention of others who are eagerly searching for just the illumination which it presents.

"The Religion of Maturity" is, quite simply, the religion of Jesus. This is a study in the mind of Christ. Building upon his earlier volume, *The Intention of Jesus*, the author directs his attention to the central question of the dependability of our knowledge of Jesus and the character of Jesus' mission in his own view. This keystone of Christian faith has been precariously threatened for many by recent New Testament studies. With wide and profound scholarship, thoroughly mastered and handled with consummate ease and skill, the writer subjects to incisive scrutiny virtually all of the major interpretations on the main issues. From this critical analysis and appraisal, he develops a constructive explication of the outlook and purpose of Jesus which is internally self-consistent, convincing, and altogether satisfying.

The book opens with a fresh examination of the genius of Old Testament prophetism at its highest; the prophet's *authority* is "the word of the Lord," his *method* is "simple audition," his *intentioned effect* is "growth in moral stature," and his *final goal* is the creation of a "redemptive community." Jesus is shown to stand fully within this climactic prophetic tradition.

There follows a careful examination of the three major alternative patterns in which prophetism was distorted and debased in postexilic Judaism—the "religion of the altar" administered by the priests whose *authority* was custom, whose *method* was ritual, and whose *institutional instrument* was the *temple*; the "religion of the book" administered by the scribes whose *authority* was tradition, whose *method* was casuistry, whose *instrument* was the law and whose ministries centered in the *synagogue*; and the "religion of the throne" preached by the apocalyptists whose *authority* was mythical figures of the past, whose *method* was "vision," and the characteristic *outcome* of whose labors was the *sect*. (Parenthetically, this three-fold analysis has interest beyond the light cast upon the formation of Jesus' mind. Reflection on the evolution of early Christianity suggests that the prophetic impulses set loose by Christ himself worked themselves out within two centuries along closely parallel lines, through ritual, through Scripture, and through hier-

archical authority.) In each instance, the relation of Jesus to debased prophetism is studied. In each instance, points of similarity or sympathetic appreciation are discovered, but these are overshadowed by dissent and rejection as he unfailingly cleaves to the authentic prophetic authority, method, purpose and ultimate goal.

Finally, Dr. Bowman brings his conclusions to focus in an exposition of true Christian faith whose *authority* is the Incarnate Word, whose sole *technique* is the Spirit of Christ, whose *product* is the Imago Dei, and whose *institutional expression* is the Body of Christ rightly understood.

Even so cursory an outline reveals the clear and masterly architecture of the work. It cannot but fail to convey an adequate impression of its richness, thoroughness, and profundity. All but the best informed will find their minds introduced to new problems as well as illumined by fresh insights. Indeed, this book may usefully serve as a layman's primer to the issues of current New Testament discussion and to the thought of the principal disputants. The author does not hesitate to differ boldly from some of the most eminent biblical scholars (he rejects the widely accepted thesis that Jesus anticipated an early end of the age—a contention more fully supported in *The Intention of Jesus*), but he differs always with full justice to the arguments rejected and through a deeper discernment and keener judgment.

Taken together with Dr. John Knox's notable recent trilogy (though Knox and Bowman do not agree at some important points), Professor Bowman's two books may be welcomed as marking a watershed in American New Testament theology. Here is solid biblical foundation upon which a rich and adequate Christology may again confidently be reared.

HENRY P. VAN DUSEN

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**America's Spiritual Culture.** By BERNARD E. MELAND. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948. pp. 216. \$2.50.

"America is awakening to its potentialities as a nation of people. . . . Some new correlation of organized religious forces with the wider institutional life of the commonwealth must be achieved, else the motivation and direction necessary to fashion the democratic process toward spiritual growth may not be forthcoming. To find a way out of our present predicament toward attaining such a correlation is the purpose of this book" (pp. 1, 4).

The author sets forth his thesis under three major headings: Religion Uprooted, Growth Toward Spiritual Culture, New Spiritual Frontiers. While recognizing the possibilities of churches and schools, he is very conscious of their limitations. "It is common knowledge that the sensitive and competent person does not fare well either in the churches or in the schools," he says (p. 10). He objects to any line sharply drawn "between Christian and pagan forces." Modern culture for him is "the whole gamut of human meanings, experiences, aspirations, insights, inventions, and operations that incorporate the accumulated knowledge and wisdom available to our time. Modern culture is the art, literature, science, and industry that undertake to carry forward this human venture through exploits of the mind and the continuous implementation of men's energies and ideas" (p. 11).

He sees little hope in either neo-Thomism or neo-Protestantism and thinks that "Protestant liberals have been concerned with a very meager human being

and with a meager mode of life" (p. 66). "The Christianity that will be adequate enough to appeal to these vital people must have more breadth. It must be broader I am convinced than either the Reformation ideal or that of the medieval age. It must be broader than social liberalism. It must have the cultural amplitude of the Renaissance but more depth. It must have the realism of the scientific era but more breadth. Above all it must have the qualities of simple goodness that open up the world to us, that enable us to receive its beauty, its love, its friendship, and to live at peace with great events" (p. 67).

Despite the inability of the church to be "the comprehensive core of culture from which the divine enterprises of society radiated," the author is hopeful about some trends in community life. "For despite the tendencies toward insulated traditions among the churches, there has grown within communities an informal relation between the churches and civic organizations. Churches have assumed the role of town hall or civic center . . ." (p. 111).

His analysis of educational developments in schools and colleges is excellent and he wisely says, "The under development of our capacity to recognize good as a positive value or to affirm the good has resulted in a widespread lack of genuine zest for the good throughout our culture" (p. 147). "Religion is creativity. It is the stimulus to wrest from our daily living the significance that is there to be attained. This is a patient process that fulfills itself best where there is a genuine rapport and understanding between interpreters of fact and interpreters of value" (p. 158).

In analyzing new spiritual frontiers, he is enthusiastic about the possibilities of "Regional Renaissance" and "The Culture of the Hearth." "The New Age into which we are moving will see the rise of village communities as centers of culture and the restoration of the family hearth" (p. 173).

The whole mood of the book is critical but appreciative and constructive. The author sees no good reason why we in America should accept as our own the pessimistic mood of Europe as if it were necessary for us to repeat the religious and other patterns of Europe. However, he recognizes the wisdom of being aware of this mood and of heeding the dangers toward which it so clearly points.

No reader will agree with all of the positions of this distinguished professor of constructive theology in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, but he will be stimulated to think and should be helped in working out his own solutions to some of the problems raised. The style is clear and the vocabulary not too technical for the reader who is interested in these problems. Students and others who are interested in education and religion should find the book especially stimulating.

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**The Shaking of the Foundations.** By PAUL TILLICH. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948. pp. 186. \$2.50.

For a theologian to write a volume of sermons is instructive because it should show us what actually means the most to him, at least in terms of a practical, living message. Because of popular demand this front-line thinker and scholar has let be published a number of sermons which had to be mimeographed for his hearers in the first place. Those well acquainted with Tillich's works in both

German and English (I took time last summer to get at some of his German works) will own that although many of his distinctive philosophic concepts are missing in explicit form, and are far from prominent even implicitly, nevertheless, this book contains much of the heart of Tillich's message.

There are twenty-two sermon-essays, in which the theological content rather than the homiletical form dominates. They are biblical in nature and exposit passages rather than merely use them for a starting point or as an excuse for topical essays. While Tillich's deeply sincere, humble, and moving personality is, naturally, missed in reading the book, to some extent and particularly to those who have heard him personally it does shine through. The sermons are existential, that is, they deal with our actual involvement in experience and history. Our present historic crisis and the transitoriness of life generally form much of the background and also of the actual content of the sermons, as good preaching should.

When looked at from the prophetic and the social angles, the sermons are particularly strong and moving. If viewed as the triumphant setting forth of the full Christian message, they disappoint the expectant believer. What makes some of the sermons almost painful to read is that they are so near and yet so far from the full Christian gospel. They thunder judgment; they ache with transitoriness; they strain for the eternal within change. The great themes are there: God, providence, and life eternal; and most of the sermons bring meaning and comfort to a bewildered and sophisticated age, especially to those who have long since given up the Christian faith as the eternal truth of all history and life. Tillich's sense of guilt and of grace, of despair and of hope, are also warm and personal.

Yet God is interpreted by Tillich as more the ground of being than as a separate, personal Spirit. Tillich warns against making him an object *beside* other objects. That is a point well taken as far as our plane of existence goes. But why not make him, as he is, the Reality beside, but also above and beyond, all other objects? Because Tillich has not an adequate doctrine of God and of creation, his doctrine of providence falls far short of the Christian conception of an all-concurring and all-controlling Companion and Guide, personally, of all history and of every life. Naturally, therefore, he has also no real word of triumph over death. All these topics he treats explicitly and well up to a point; but he stops short of the crucial affirmations. Perhaps that is why his last sermon, "I Am Doing a New Thing," though full of vitality and fruitful suggestions, admits that "every decision is tragic," and is lifted mostly only by a closing paragraph on love, which is not developed into the Christian symphony of victory, because the full implications of love are nowhere carried out.

There are beautiful sermons, "The Depth of Existence," "The Yoke of Religion," "He Who Is Christ," "Doing the Truth," "You Are Accepted," full of Christian insights and pointing to hope. I am convinced, however, that no hope is more than soothing syrup that falls short of an explicit trust in a personal God, the Creator and Redeemer, a personal Providence, the Lord of history, and a personal immortality, the fulfillment beyond our physical death of our little lives here. Nothing less than this can solve the problem of evil, give fulfilling meaning to our whole scope of suffering and existence, and make Christ central to preaching.

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**The Christian Outlook.** By KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948. pp. xii-229. \$2.50.

No writer is more competent than Dr. Kenneth Latourette to present the position of the Christian church as a factor in the world today, or to forecast its future as a world religion. Although the book is made up of lectures, prepared for theological students, and given in seminaries and colleges, it is equally interesting to laymen and clergy. It should be read by every thinking Christian, who should consider with the author what he terms as "the most pressing problem of a crucial era."

That problem deals with the future of Christianity, and suggests the basic question: Will Christianity survive the opposing forces of a rapidly changing world? It is a world in revolt which attempts to replace Christianity by the new ideologies of fascism, national socialism, and communism; a world of materialistic science and growing secularism; a world in which the cultures that have given it nourishment are passing away. The answer, according to Dr. Latourette, should be in the affirmative. In a sketchy survey of the expansion of Christianity from its earliest beginnings, evidence is shown of its ability to meet these changing conditions.

The outstanding recent losses of Christianity are attributed to: the shifting of populations to the cities; the inroads of humanism, secularism and communism; and, perhaps temporarily, to the recent World War. Present gains, which exceed the losses, are to be found in increasing numbers, in indigenous leadership, in assimilation into other cultures, in a larger place in world affairs, and in unity, notably in the ecumenical movement.

Having concluded that Christianity will continue to survive each crisis with ever-increasing vigor and influence, the author portrays the world trends which are influencing the development of the various branches of the Christian church, and also those trends within each of those branches, in order to determine which, if any, may become the channel through which Christianity will advance to greater power and usefulness. In a critical analysis of the trends within the Eastern Orthodox churches and the Roman Catholic Church, the writer dismisses one after another as incapable of creating new life streams. The Eastern churches, whether Greek, Armenian, Coptic, Jacobite, or Ethiopian, are characterized as on the defensive, fighting to retard a slow but inevitable dissolution. The Roman Catholic Church, in spite of new life and resources from its progressive American membership, has become stereotyped in its medieval system; and, while not dying, cannot become the desired channel for an advancing Christianity.

It is in Protestantism that Dr. Latourette finds the hope for the future of Christianity as a living force, for in it are to be found the trends to which can be attributed the remarkable advance of Christianity in the past century. It will not be the Protestantism of the past, or of the present, but a new Protestantism which will emerge from the old, through which Christianity will find new life as it goes on into the future. This continuation of Christianity will depend upon the gospel. Christianity and the gospel are not synonymous, for the former is but a partial expression of the latter. Sometime this world will pass and the human race will vanish. Then Christianity as a religion will cease, but the fruits of the gospel will go on into eternity.

Thus having answered the question as to the future of Christianity, Dr.

Latourette closes the book with a challenge to Christians of this generation. The opportunity and attendant obligation are imperative. Who will respond to the challenge of our Lord to present the gospel to all men and endeavor to make his teachings the rule for all civilization? Those who respond will become the channel through which Christianity will advance. Those who respond will be among those who live even now in the Kingdom of God.

The reader cannot fail to be impressed by the abundance of facts which are at the command of the author, and his ability to marshal those facts into orderly array to support his conclusions. It is not always easy for the layman to follow his line of reasoning. Dr. Latourette has an inherent desire to be fair, and too often his conclusions are confused by following an argument in support of one viewpoint by a parenthetical argument against that viewpoint. For instance, in following his discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the various branches of the Christian church, it becomes difficult for the reader to be sure whether the ultimate opinion of the writer is "pro" or "con." However, the average reader will find the book profitable and interesting and a stimulant to more fruitful Christian service.

ELBERT M. MOFFATT

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**The United States and China.** By JOHN KING FAIRBANK. (In the American Foreign Policy Library, Sumner Welles, Editor.) Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948. pp. 398. \$3.75.

No one interested in China, and especially in the relations between the United States and China, should fail to read this important book. It is a treatise on Chinese sociology; note the excellent discussion of the peasant-bureaucratic state (p. 11), in which it is brought out that the perplexity of China arises out of the fact that her problem, so far as America is concerned, is not one of size but of difference. Here was a society resting on a peasant class, one in which merchants were less powerful than officials, and one in which there was no growth of science, and no nationalism as a motivating force in public life. For such a nation to remake itself is something that only the Chinese can accomplish. "No nation can reorganize China from the outside. . . . Today it is even less likely that control of political life in China can be taken over by an outside power, either Russian or American." This is one of the soundest themes running through the book, and every American should keep repeating it to himself over and over again. If China is to adopt scientific medicine as its own—and it is now a matter of current observation that quite a few in official posts are encouraging the teaching of old Chinese medicine and asking for a system of licensure for those who prove well qualified therein—then the procedures and regulations must be devised by the Chinese themselves. The same is true of law and education and a dozen other disciplines. To remake all these is China's responsibility and task. No one else can suggest or perform wisely.

And the book is a discussion, too, of philosophy and religion. Chapter 4, "The Confucian Pattern," illustrates this clearly. The section on the tyranny of the Chinese language must be mastered by all who desire to approach with intelligence our relations with China, whether commercial, official, or religious.

"The use of an ideographic script for the transmission of the cultural inheritance from one generation to the next gave the characters themselves an independent status." One of the most stimulating chapters is on "The Revolutionary Process," considering, in succession, the revolt of the peasants (1851-1864); the reform movement, coming to a head in 1898; the political revolution of 1911; and the vigorous nationalistic movement from 1925 onwards. This chapter and the succeeding one on "Nationalism and Communism" leads one on, to agree or differ with Mr. Fairbank's findings, as the case may be; but in any case, to look at the political picture in the light of its economic aspects. Recent news dispatches make it clear that all groups in China are really concerned to use "the more active betterment and reorganization of peasant life as the sanction for new forms of state power." To the extent that the desire and action in this direction are realized, we may indeed agree that a new phase in China's process of revolution is at hand.

We are very fortunate to have, as Appendix I, General Marshall's statement on China of January 7, 1947. Here is a state document of maturity and weight. Because of the worsening of Russian-American relations today, it will take us time to discover whether or not the Marshall document and the Marshall attitude are to give the American public the cue as to our continuing policy.

There are times when one wishes that Mr. Fairbank did not take so decided a view that the missionary has been a prejudiced spectator and participant. Thus, "it is not surprising that the Western missionary's somber conception of original sin had difficulty in overcoming the happier Confucian view." If the author knew the best exemplars of the modern missionary movement more intimately, he could not possibly believe them all somber.

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**Christian Voices in China.** Edited by CHESTER S. MIAO. New York: The Friendship Press, 1948. pp. 216. Cloth, \$2.00, paper, \$1.00.

**Rising Through the Dust.** By ARCHIE R. CROUCH. New York: The Friendship Press, 1948. pp. 179. Cloth, \$1.50, paper, \$.90.

The first is a timely book, coming as it does just as the Protestant Churches under the leadership of the Foreign Missions Conference are launching an advance program to meet the great needs and opportunities around the world. Dr. Miao, the editor, makes it plain that the old culture of China is dying and that already there are signs of groping about in the dark, on the part of many thoughtful people, for a new philosophy of life. He asks if Christianity can afford to miss the rare privilege and supreme challenge it has today in China.

He has brought together a group of distinguished men and women to emphasize the urgency of strengthening the Christian forces now. The book is divided into three parts: "The Christian Spirit Tried by War," "Special Problems and Difficulties in China Today," "New Opportunities and Challenges in the Postwar Period." T. C. Chao of Yenching University, one of the six presidents of the World Council of Churches recently elected at Amsterdam, says that Christianity offers what many in China are eagerly looking for—a moral and spiritual foundation and a dynamic for real democracy. "China," he says, "travails in rebirth, in fear of being stillborn. Only apostolic Christianity can give it deliverance!"

Dr. Miao himself describes the problems of Christianity in Communist areas,

while Dr. Tan Jeu-mei, Executive Secretary of the China Christian Educational Association, and a member of the faculty of Ginling, gives a most interesting account of the excellent work which Chinese women did during the war, and points up the urgency of increasing the opportunities of leadership for women in the Christian church.

New opportunities for Christianizing family life, for bettering the conditions of the farmers, who constitute eighty per cent of the people in China, the need of more and better literature, the urgent need for more hospitals and medical personnel, are graphically set forth by experts in these various fields.

The book closes with a chapter, "An Oasis in a Vast Human Desert," by W. B. Djang, organizer and director of the Border Missions, one-time director of the National Christian Service Council to the Wounded. It is fitting that the book should end with this account of the reaching out by the Christian church in China to the border regions of China—a vast field, covering more than half of the immense area of the country, occupied by nearly forty million people of varying degrees of civilization.

Archie R. Crouch's extensive travels in China during the war in intimate association with students as they together trekked west, gave him unusual opportunities to observe Chinese Christians in travail. In *Rising Through the Dust* he cites ample evidence that a new Letter to the Hebrews might be written with a Chinese setting. Indeed, the book is full of thumbnail sketches of Chinese Christians, some well-known leaders, others inconspicuous people in out-of-the-way places, but all having "obtained a good report through faith" in time of great trouble.

The book should be especially helpful in bringing to the young people of the church in the United States, something of the vitality of the Christian experiences of many young people in China, especially the students.

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**College Reading and Religion.** A Survey of College Reading Materials sponsored by the EDWARD W. HAZEN FOUNDATION and the Committee on Religion and Education of the AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948. pp. xi-345. \$5.00.

Recent studies have seen a number of studies of the American college. Some of them have been undertaken by committees of faculty or of students and faculty and have been directed toward the improvement of the curriculum or of the organization of the communal life of the college. Some of them are the work of individuals or groups concerned to survey a particular aspect of life within the colleges. *College Reading and Religion* belongs to the second category. The book is an inquiry as to the extent to which college reading material gives an adequate presentation of religion. By reading material the committee in charge means the textbooks in general use in the fields of philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, education, English literature, music, European history, economics, sociology, cultural anthropology, the physical sciences, and the biological sciences. These textbooks have been analyzed by scholars of distinction, their reports forming the content of this book.

According to Dr. Donald P. Cottrell, the chairman of the survey committee: "No body of reading assignments can be fully understood in terms of their edu-

cational results except as the purpose of both the teacher and the student in doing the reading are taken into account. Nevertheless, the content of thought and the interpretation given to familiar facts and phenomena are significantly suggested by the choice of reading matter."

The evidence of this reading material shows religion to be a "neglected field" for college students. Professor Calhoun declares with regard to histories of philosophy: "There is ground for acute dissatisfaction with the treatment of religion in too many of the usable textbooks." In the physical and biological sciences, according to Professors Margenau and Northrop, the usual textbook contains no reference to religion. In books assigned for collateral reading, "where issues arise concerning the theoretical assumptions best fitted to take care of the natural history data and to account for the scientific findings, the role of the theory is very much greater, the philosophical issues thereby raised become explicitly recognized, and the attendant reference to religion is explicit and frequent." Professor Lang states, "we still do not possess simple textbooks that are even remotely abreast of the present state of musical scholarship or that convey to the student the realization that music is a form of thought, a manifestation of spiritual values and not a mere accomplishment."

The majority of the authors are hopeful for the future. It is recognized that textbooks produced between the two World Wars are likely to ignore or depreciate religion. As disciplines struggling for "academic respectability," psychology and sociology were particularly hit by this period's obsession with the purely objective. Publications appearing since 1941 are more aware of the significance of religion for the individual and for society.

*College Reading and Religion* is especially intended for faculty members and those who serve on curriculum committees. It should appeal to a wider circle than that. Its reports present a stimulating and sobering description of the developments and present tendencies in the intellectual world. Professor Orton's chapter on economics, for example, is not only a review of economic textbooks but a searching discussion of the relation of religion and economics. To those interested in religion or education or both, *College Reading and Religion* indicates the inadequacies of current college practice and the possibilities for the future and reiterates the fact that "there can be no doubt that the key to improved consideration of religious values in education lies in the quality of the persons who do the teaching."

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**The Book of Books: An Introduction.** (The Book of Human Destiny: I.)  
By SOLOMON GOLDMAN. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948. pp. xvi-459. \$3.75.

This is the first volume of a colossal work (in thirteen or more volumes) on the Old Testament. In the later volumes Dr. Goldman will give a translation and commentary of the basic parts of the Hebrew Bible, a complete summary and historical analysis of each book, and "echoes and allusions" to individual passages. The scope of this Jewish work is almost comparable to *The Interpreter's Bible*, a monumental Protestant commentary which the Abingdon-Cokesbury Press is planning to publish.

In this volume Dr. Goldman, the rabbi of the Anshe Emet Synagogue in

Chicago since 1929, deals with the Old Testament as a whole. The most valuable part of the volume, in my opinion, is the "Echoes and Allusions" to the Bible (pp. 127-337), followed by a special bibliography and index (pp. 338-355). This collection of allusions, based on extensive reading through many years, seems to me one of the fullest ever printed, but I am no authority on such matters. It should prove extremely useful to lecturers, preachers, and writers—in spite of its bewildering miscellaneous character. The bibliography to these allusions is so full that I am amazed to be able to add three titles: A. S. Cook, *Biblical Quotations in Old English Prose Writers*, Second Series, New York, 1903. R. B. Pattison, *Book Titles from the Bible*, American Bible Society, 1942. H. E. Spence, *Old Testament Dramas*, Duke University, 1943.

The first part of the book (pp. 1-126) consists of six chapters (with abundant notes, pp. 357-403, and a general bibliography, pp. 407-436). Here the author deals with what is usually called the general introduction to the Old Testament—language and style, literary history, textual transmission, history of the canon, and of biblical criticism. The reader should, however, be warned at once that—whether deliberately or unconsciously—Rabbi Goldman in these chapters does not offer objective research, but thinly disguised propaganda. His vast erudition and amazing learning are mobilized in the defense of his faith. With the eloquence of an Isaiah, with the zeal of an Elijah, the author gives us a panegyric of the Bible and a eulogy of the Jewish people. The Chronicler (in I-II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah) wrote the first apology of Judaism, and Josephus (*Against Apion*) the second: these are the models of Dr. Goldman in writing the latest one. Like them (cf. his quotations from Josephus on pp. 104f.) he extols the Jews and belittles the Gentiles. Such is his zest, that historical reality becomes a distorted shadow of itself. Nor does he spare German scholars, such as J. Wellhausen, Eduard Meyer, Friedrich Delitzsch, and even the late American Egyptologist, James H. Breasted—all of whom he deems unfriendly to the Jews (pp. 39-103).

What is Jewish is unique in its "ineffable sublimity." This is alleged for the Hebrew language (some delightful philological nonsense on pp. 1-5 is adduced as evidence); the Jewish sense for nature and art; the theme, style, and history of Hebrew literature; the devotion of the Jews to their Bible; the prophetic movement, etc. I must resist the temptation to discuss such matters in detail, and I shall close with two quotations in which the author unwittingly characterizes his own book and method: the volume "ceases to be history or criticism and reads more like the solicitous pronouncements of zealots" (p. 75); when the author "proposes a theory he will smash the head of any fact that will not submit to it" (p. 71).

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**Religion Through the Ages.** Edited by HERMON F. BELL and CHARLES S. MACFARLAND. New York: Philosophical Library, 1948. pp. xlv+445. \$5.00.

Five dollars is a good deal to be asked to pay for a scrapbook, which this pretty much is. It is an anthology of passages from literature—many of them mere snippets of a line or two, some of them as much as a whole poem or several consecutive paragraphs of prose—gathered by Mr. Bell to set forth the essentials of

his own religion. Twenty-nine authors are represented—most prominently George Eliot, Thomas Carlyle, Victor Hugo, and Mr. Bell's Amherst professor, Charles Garman. Also included are scissored sections from such diverse authors as Epicurus, Cleanthes, Calvin, and à Kempis, though not in such abundance as from the poets Bryant, Lowell, Whittier, and the two Brownings. Unfortunately (is it to save printing costs on our five-dollar volume?) the printed "gems" are accompanied by no identification other than footnotes, which must then be traced to the back of the book. Each author, however, is introduced by a biographical sketch by Mr. Macfarland, who also supplies a thirty-page introduction on Mr. Bell's life and thought.

This introduction is valuable, for it does a good deal to illuminate the theological outlook to which Bell and Macfarland belong. We learn that both were students at the Yale Divinity School, a few years apart, about the turn of the century. They reflect the liberalism of the period, the distress over what was felt to be outworn dogma, the desire to reinterpret faith in a way acceptable to modern science. Bell, as the more radical of the two, concluded that the words "divinity" and "incarnation" should not be used of Jesus in any sense other than might be applied "to all great and good men." Examined on his views by the Congregational church authorities, he was granted a preaching license only with reluctance. He turned therefore for ordination to the Unitarian church; but finding himself not content in that body, abandoned the ministry for a career in business, where he has remained, though with unsatisfied theological yearnings. In 1910 he attempted to launch, unsuccessfully, a "Catholic Congregational Church," advertised in the prospectus as "a non-Christian church for the worship of God and the service of men." Later, in 1924, appeared his *Introduction to Theology*, in which he laments the lack of any "worthwhile" books on the subject, criticizes the doctrine of the Trinity as obsolete, and calls on theology to use the method of science and base itself on new premises.

The present volume collects the scriptures of what Mr. Bell understands to be "religion through the ages." That religion, of course, is a universal theism. No writings are intended to be included, he says, which are "restrictive or provincial." Some readers will wonder at his including bits from Dante and Augustine. His answer is that although *some* writings of these persons are colored by their times and world outlook, such differences from his own beliefs belong to "the merely incidental, like clothes or language." It may be noted that Mr. Macfarland, in introducing Dante, reads him as teaching that "man's will is absorbed into the divine and attains harmony with the universe." Probably this is the sense in which Mr. Bell also reads Dante.

Skimming through the selections in this volume, the critical reader will have impressed on him anew the tremendous vogue of pantheism in nineteenth-century literature. Note, for example, the following: "The world concentrated is God. God expanded, is the world" (Hugo); "Great souls are portions of eternity" (Lowell); "Man's word is God in man" (Tennyson); "Is not God's Universe a Symbol of the Godlike; is not Immensity a Temple; is not Man's history, and Men's History, a perpetual Evangel?" (Carlyle). Subjectivism, sentimental idealism, moralism, imagination substituting for grace—these are everywhere in evidence. Lowell's poem "The Present Crisis," including the well-known "Once to every man and nation" lines (sometimes sung as a hymn), deserves our thoughtful rereading; for it illustrates not only a pompous moral abstractionism but also

the great difference between crisis as seen from the hollow perspective of nineteenth-century ethical culture and crisis as we are nowadays probing it in more specifically Christian terms.

Bell quotes with great approval Whittier's dictum that "the life of truth" proceeds from "the rot of creeds." But today, I think, more of us are inclined to read "root" for "rot," and go on from there to examine the substance of creeds.

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**The Creator and the Adversary.** By EDWIN LEWIS. New York: The Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948. pp. 279. \$3.00.

In a world where wrong obviously is so strong, can God really be the Ruler? To this persistent question, Dr. Edwin Lewis, professor of systematic theology and philosophy of religion at Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey, answers with a resounding and timely "Yes!" That "Yes" includes the very evident fact of human experience that all life is conflict. It also affirms the answer of divine revelation: There *is* an almighty and responsible Creator. There *is* a malignant and determined Adversary. Man, inextricably involved in the whole vast web of existence, is the focal point of this conflict. In short, this book is a well-reasoned evangelical interpretation of the Christian faith in terms of conflict.

The argument moves through three stages: Creation Through Conflict; The Creator as Participant; Toward a New Creation. In Dr. Lewis' view, offered as a "speculative venture," there are three uncreated, eternal existents: the divine which is creative, the demonic which is discreative, and the residue which is noncreative. The divine and the demonic, being absolute opposites, can affect each other only through the "residual uncreated constant." In the drama of existence all creativity bespeaks the activity of the divine, the supremely personal. The demonic discreative can function only where creativity already is active. The arena where the two meet is that necessary aspect of existence which Dr. Lewis calls "the noncreative." Man represents the supreme victory of the creative power in the organic realm, just as man also provides the discreative power with a supreme opportunity to thwart the Creator in the moral and spiritual realm. This explains why man cannot measure the depths of his own existence apart from the venture of faith: "a man's one most free act." The practical or intellectual atheism of the humanist leaves man still a mystery to himself.

In his attempt to show how and why the Creator commits himself to increase the domain of holy love by actual self-participation in the creative enterprise, Dr. Lewis is as critical of traditional theology as he is of humanistic self-sufficiency. He rejects the speculation of Augustine and Calvin and others which connects the guilt of the whole human race with the fall of Adam, because to him the tradition of inherited guilt destroys individuality. It does injustice to Romans 5-8. It assumes that Adam was created a mature man suddenly confronted with a novel moral situation. The author affirms instead that there was evil before there was sin, because evil is inherent in the nature of existence. Every man becomes guilty by virtue of his own sin, although it is "inevitable" that he shall sin. At this point Dr. Lewis' argument becomes most vulnerable.

Since the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is internally rich and free, there are adequate resources within the divine nature to complete what has been begun.

Faith therefore has a sufficient guarantee of the ultimate triumph of the creative process. At the cross, in the death of Jesus Christ, evil did not conquer, but love. Here the Adversary's last weapon was despoiled by the resurrection. Thus at utter cost to himself, by a love that overleaps all barriers, the Creator secures a family of sons. Men receive the power to become sons by accepting what God in Christ has done for them. The church militant carries on the work of creativity in the presence of destructive discreativity, and in so far as it does not do this, the church fails of its proper task of "making all things new." The church is the "Fellowship of the Cross."

One of the most attractive features of this book is its sheer readability. Wherever his argument otherwise might be abstruse, Dr. Lewis has made generous use of illuminating illustrations from the nineteenth-century British poets, a field in which he seems to be fully as much at home as in philosophy. His argument never lags, but is clearly conceived and straightforward in its appeal. Thus the teacher inspires interest while he instructs.

This book will doubtless draw fire from conservatives as well as liberals. Some will feel that Dr. Lewis, for all his emphasis on the actuality of the Adversary, has not made enough of a case for a "personal devil." The word *devil*, in fact, is hardly ever used in the text and it does not appear at all in the index. The claim on p. 146, however, that "he" better fits the Adversary than "it" is not to be overlooked. On the other hand, some will ask, "Why bring up this 'dead' issue at all?" Others will feel that the author has been overdramatic in his use of metaphorical language to describe the relations between the Creator and the Adversary. But in view of the intense accentuation of the strife between good and evil forces in our present world, this issue of a malignant Adversary cannot be shrugged off. Dr. Lewis has restated the issue in bold and militant terms. He has presented a cogent argument which carries strong conviction with it. Every serious person who is in search of a realistic answer to the enigma of his own existence, and of the world in which he finds himself, must reckon with this brilliant interpretation of the Christian faith.

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**The Poem of Job.** By WILLIAM BARRON STEVENSON. London: Oxford University Press, 1947. pp. vi-123. \$3.00.

Crises in the life of the world are usually accompanied by a renewed desire to find in religion the answers to the causes and meaning of human suffering. In recent years the popular interest has centered largely in apocalyptic writings such as Daniel and Revelation. These books frequently have been given interpretations lacking in historical and critical insights. On the other hand, contemporary thought in the church has not given due consideration to the meaning of suffering as set forth in Habakkuk and the Psalms or, with greater force, in the Second Isaiah and Job. Thus a new book on Job is a welcome event.

Professor Stevenson concurs in the views now generally held by scholars as to the secondary nature of portions of the dialogues, such as the speech of Elihu (chs. 32-37) and the discourse on the nature of wisdom (ch. 28). His primary interest, however, is in the relationship between the great poem constituting the body of the book and the prosaic prologue (chs. 1-2) and the epilogue (ch. 42:7-17). Stevenson holds that these two prose sections are the beginning and the end of a folk tale, the essential middle part of which has been lost. This story is similar to others of the

sufferings of good men common in the ancient world. The author of the poems of Job inherited, according to Stevenson, a tradition of the sufferings of a pious man, such as is expressed in these prose sections of the book. However, Stevenson insists that the author wrote entirely independently of the prologue and epilogue and never intended that these prose sections be incorporated with his book. The discrepancies between the prose sections and the poem are great and the position that the dialogues are independent of the prologue or of the epilogue or of both is one familiar to scholars. The argument that the dialogues are unintelligible apart from the prologue is not convincing. The resulting abruptness with which Job begins to speak (ch. 3) is hardly greater than that with which Mark introduces Jesus receiving baptism at the hands of John.

Stevenson's position concerning the attitude toward Job on the part of his friends possesses a measure of novelty not found in his discussion of the literary structure of the book. Scholars generally agree that the friends believed all suffering is a result of sin. Job is suffering. Therefore, he must be a sinner. Stevenson, on the other hand, endeavors to show that the friends do not accuse Job of sin. They concede that "Job is a good man, whose suffering has been appointed by God for his discipline and improvement" (p. 26). The author finds it difficult at times to maintain this thesis. For example, he holds that the condemnations of Eliphaz (ch. 22) should not be understood as a personal attack upon Job, but upon every man, that is, men in general. Such an interpretation appears artificial. It is not likely that the author of this great epic poem on suffering would fail to present the so familiar and frequently expressed conviction of Israel that suffering is the fruit of sin.

The author has emended the text quite freely. But in spite of this, possibly the most valuable feature of the book is the translation with its critical notes. The book is too brief to permit a comprehensive study of this great epic of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, a serious student will find the work stimulating and helpful.

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**The Choice Is Always Ours.** Edited by DOROTHY BERKLEY PHILLIPS, LUCILLE M. NIXON, ELIZABETH BOYDEN HOWES. New York: Richard R. Smith, 1948. pp. xxii-511. \$4.50.

This is an age of anthologies. Anthologies on every conceivable subject continue to come from the presses. Certainly there is no dearth of religious anthologies. Kirby Page, Aldous Huxley, Luccock and Brentano, Browne, Bouquet, and Kepler, to name only a few, have given us notable and valuable collections. It might seem to be the rash editor and publisher who would attempt another. But for all their faults, anthologies have a special merit and perform a useful service. So here is another large, solid, superbly arranged, and handsomely printed contribution to this important kind of literature.

This is not simply another sizable booklet of epigrammatic wisdom and capsulated happy phrases culled from wide reading. Actually it is a guidebook and source book for spiritual progression—a skillfully designed and substantially built treasure house of religious devotion, psychological insight, and spiritual instruction drawn from 170 illumined saints and sages, ancient and modern. The building blocks are an amazing collection of passages from writers on religion, theology, philosophy, psychology, and science. My friend Dr. Clarence H. Yarrow aptly calls this book "a kind of scrip-

tures from Matthew to Jung which pours new life into old wisdom." Well said, for the selections include such saints and seers as Laotze, Buddha, Augustine, Eckhart, and Fénelon, and such moderns as John Woolman, Gandhi, Murry, Fritz Kunkel, and Gerald Heard. There are many not so well known—Grou, Rilke, Vlastos, Péguy, Denck, Rudhyar—which readers will be grateful to have brought to their attention. They all belong here. And they all know what they are talking about.

The unifying principle employed by the editors is essentially that of the great paradox of Jesus found in Luke 17:33. But they have found among all the questing spirits and spiritual masters a basic and convincing agreement as to what all men desire, what every human being is capable of becoming, the nature and stages of "the Way," the methods and results for those who progressively follow the Way. Accordingly, the book is divided into three main sections: the *Way* and its implications; the *Techniques* for its attainment; and the *Outcomes*. There is also an appendix on classic and modern ideas of God, a complete index, and a fine list of suggested readings.

One of the unique features of this anthology is its attempt to synthesize religious and psychological insights. There are many cogent passages from modern psychologists dealing with the relation of psychotherapy to the religious way. For this reason the book has both immediate appeal and universal significance. Without intending any invidious comparisons, it is my judgment that *The Choice Is Always Ours* will prove more helpful to more readers than, say, Huxley's *The Perennial Philosophy*—both because it is more "Christian" in its central thrust and because it levies more upon contemporary writers, particularly the depth psychologists.

The total effect is not polemical of any religious tradition, but it does have quiet overtones of the Quaker tradition at its best—suggesting a combination of practical mysticism with social usefulness. It neglects, without intending to do so, the "sacramental" as one of the means of grace in the soul's quest and progress. Anglicans and Catholics may feel a lack at this point. But the selections are so varied as to source, school, and tradition that it will speak to the needs and conditions of all kinds of readers. Liberal and orthodox alike will find light and spiritual food here.

This is a book for "seekers," for those who are not in the church or have left the church, yet seek a way which may be followed creatively. It shows the reader the path, and provides materials for the journey. If read with discernment it will show the bewildered modern how to find his way and to walk in it. But the book will also prove a boon for those who have already entered upon the Way; for they will find further illumination among the many-tongued witnesses.

This reviewer happens to know the three editors, so it is especially gratifying to be able to commend the book so heartily. Further, it seems worth noting that despite the fact that it is an anthology, the volume has an intimate personal character. Several persons, over a span of years, helped to gather this store of documented wisdom and inspiration; but our three young women editors have guided the process and arranged the material for publication. Many readers will feel, as I have felt, that they have been graciously permitted to share the private devotions of these three earnest seekers after spiritual reality.

Yes, this is a beautiful and wise and useful book of rare interest—a valuable resource for worship, for private devotional reading, or for group discussion. It strikes me as having intriguing possibilities as a textbook for an unconventional course in religion. I know of one university chaplain who is using it as the "text" for a series of chapel meditations. Anyone who reads with comprehension and responsiveness

will find power and wisdom to live joyously and productively in this fear-haunted world. More than that, he will find himself moving progressively toward the Source of all life and truth.

PAUL E. PFUETZE

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**Early Theological Writings.** By GEORG WILHELM FRIEDRICH HEGEL. Translated by T. M. KNOX, with an Introduction and Fragments Translated by RICHARD KRONER. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948. pp. xi-339. \$5.00.

All who are interested in Hegel's philosophy as an interpretation of human experience and Western intellectual history will welcome the appearance of this book in English. It is an able, careful translation of the chief unpublished manuscripts of Hegel's youth, first collected by Hermann Nohl and published in Germany in 1907. Their publication in Germany has stimulated a new interest in Hegel, particularly in the genesis of his ideas, and it is certain that this translation will influence the course of Hegelian ideas in English-speaking lands. The two major manuscripts, "The Positivity of the Christian Religion" and "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate," are substantially complete and finished essays. They reveal the locus of young Hegel's interests as well as the many influences, both personal and cultural, which helped to mould the later philosopher. For a study of the genesis of Hegel's ideas this book is the indispensable key.

That Hegel's ideas had a genesis and a history may come as a surprise to those who have only struggled with his mature system. There they seem too often to have sprung from a complex intellect, sure of itself, dogmatic, imperious. Modern students of Hegel are constantly antagonized by his unrelenting dogmatism as much as by his attempt to capture everything on earth and in heaven in the toils of an all-inclusive system. In the *Early Theological Writings* both the system and the dogmatism are largely missing. The gain in interest and freshness is great, comparable to that found in reading Kant's *Anthropology* after the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In these writings Hegel is groping, changing his ideas, struggling after a point of view of his own, attempting to come to terms with the disparate elements in the classical tradition and his contemporary culture.

It is doubtful if he would have welcomed the publication of these manuscripts. We know from his gibe at Schelling that he disapproved of getting "a philosophical education in public." One of the unfortunate aspects of the German academic tradition is the imputation of disgrace involved in changing one's mind on matters of philosophic import. Nevertheless, much of the sting is taken out of Hegelian dogmatism by a study of these early private manuscripts, precisely because they are contradictory, unsystematic, and tentative.

The earliest essay on the "Positivity of the Christian Religion" (by positivity he means the dogmatic, ecclesiastical character of the Christian faith) is for the most part written in the spirit of the Enlightenment. It shows the influence of Kant, Lessing, and many other rationalists and liberals. There is strong protest against the church, both Catholic and Protestant, and against Christian dogma as a perversion of the plain moral teachings of Jesus. The church's fundamental error, young Hegel maintains, is that it ignores the inalienable rights belonging to all man's faculties, particularly to reason. Bitter denunciation of organized Christianity is reserved for

its usurpation of civil authority in the denial of rights to dissenters and minorities. Had he held to the strong liberalism expressed in this essay, much of the *Philosophy of Right*, especially the objectionable features, would not have been written.

Even in this work, most under the influence of the Enlightenment, Hegel cannot be called a true son of the Age of Reason. One striking section titled "Is Judea the Teuton's Fatherland?" develops Hegel's belief in the need for a *Volkreligion*, whose model should be Greek civic religion. His complaint against Christianity shifts to the assertion that its material is foreign, unfriendly to human aspiration, and deeply dualistic. At this early stage he had developed the conviction that a living religion should serve social, political, and broadly cultural ends, not simply serve as a support for individual morality.

"The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate," the most significant of the translated essays, is informed with a new spirit and message. We discover in it that peculiar blend in Hegel of mystic and rationalist, of Romanticism and Enlightenment, so often noted by critics. Here he is plainly, though still tentatively, engaged in his lifelong task of synthesizing the conflicts between the humanistic, secular culture of Greece and Rome and the Judeo-Christian heritage. Central to this task is his conception of the significance of Jesus' life and work. One gets the impression that the figure of Jesus came to this searching student as something of a personal revelation. It seems clear that in Hegel's interpretation of Jesus' relationship to God lies an important clue to the formulation of his later metaphysics.

Professor Kroner has translated some minor fragments and furnished an introduction which ambitiously attempts to deal with the whole of Hegel's philosophy. Much of it is sound and admirably clear. This reviewer is disturbed, however, by Professor Kroner's attempt to make Hegel a good Kantian while at the same time admitting that "he disputed many of Kant's doctrines and even his fundamental position" (p. 5). Hegel's debt to Kant is a vexed question, but it is hardly enlightening to consider them as sharing the same philosophic position. Nevertheless both Knox and Kroner deserve high praise for the accomplishment of a difficult and highly useful piece of work.

J. GLENN GRAY

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**The Organization of The Methodist Church.** By NOLAN B. HARMON. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948. pp. 281. \$2.75.

This is a timely book and a much needed one. It has been a long time since any comprehensive work dealing with this general theme has appeared anywhere in American Methodism. Certainly nothing of the kind has been published since the unification of the three branches of the church in 1939. For the last nine years, the only available sources of full and authentic information on questions relating to the constitution, organization, administration, and polity of The Methodist Church have been *Daily Christian Advocates*, General Conference Journals, *Disciplines*, and Reports of the Judicial Council. But now, within the covers of this new book, we have all the important materials contained in these several publications brought together in an unusually valuable vade-mecum.

Newly elected bishops will welcome Dr. Harmon's volume, for it will help them to "learn fast"; theological students sorely need it; it should find a place beside the Bible and the *Discipline* on the desk of every district superintendent and pastor. A careful reading of *The Organization of The Methodist Church* by lay officials would

help immensely in smoothing the way for the efficient administration of local churches. Beyond the confines of Methodism also, in these days when the union of the churches is being widely discussed, this book will enable leaders of sister denominations to understand the "connectional system" of The Methodist Church and to discover its unique value in the field of church government.

In planning this volume, the chapters of which were originally delivered as lectures at Southwestern University, Georgetown, Texas, in 1946, the author has scrupulously sought to avoid any partisan handling of controversial issues. Indeed, his approach to the whole subject is satisfyingly objective. Readers of the book will be impressed, for example, with the fairness and sympathetic understanding displayed in the author's clear elucidations of the features of organization and administration peculiar to each of the three constituent churches in Methodist union.

The outline of this study of Methodist organization is simple and clear-cut. Following an introductory chapter, "Of Origins," which in brief space furnishes a historical background of John Wesley's relation to the beginnings of Methodism in America, the discussion is divided into five parts, namely, "Episcopacy," "The Conference System," "The Jurisdictional Division," "Methodist Law and the Judicial Council," and "The Executive Agencies." A comprehensive index helps to make the book a good working manual.

Dr. Harmon gives his readers some illuminating explanations of features in the present structure of The Methodist Church which are new to many of its members. Among these innovations may be mentioned four of major importance—the method of electing bishops, the Jurisdictional Conferences, the Central Conferences, and the Judicial Council. Throughout the history of both of the former Episcopal Methodisms, bishops were elected by General Conferences. Under the Plan of Union, this power to elect bishops was taken from the General Conference and lodged in the Jurisdictions. "Before the adoption of the Plan of Union a bishop anywhere was a bishop everywhere," says Dr. Harmon. "So he is now in title, honor, and power to ordain. But formerly he was a general officer of a connectional church, and while the bishops in practice assigned themselves to specific areas and conferences, they still preserved, in theory at least, the idea that each was a 'general' superintendent. A bishop in Omaha was a bishop in New York; a bishop in Atlanta might order a change in appointments in Louisville—at least theoretically. But the Plan of Union did away with all that by the jurisdictional division of the church."

Critics of the present method of electing bishops and of regionalizing them think that the whole procedure "ensmall" the episcopacy. They would like to see the power to elect and to consecrate these leaders restored directly to the General Conference. Dr. Harmon, however, seems to hold the view that the reduced individual standing of bishops elected by Jurisdictions is offset by the new responsibility and power now officially vested in the bishops collectively; that is, in the Council of Bishops.

The author devotes about two pages and a half to the Central Conferences. This subject deserves more space. Such issues as the rights, privileges, and powers of bishops elected by Central Conferences, and the amount of support for such episcopal leaders and how that support shall be provided, are questions which for years have caused long debates in the various Commissions on Central Conferences.

Methodists who desire to raise questions regarding the make-up of the boards, commissions, and committees that constitute the executive agencies of the church will find reliable answers in Part Five of this book. If all Quarterly and Annual Conference members were to master this section of the book, the missionary, educational,

publishing, and reform movements of the church would take on new and vital significance in the eyes of both laymen and ministers.

In *The Organization of The Methodist Church*, Dr. Harmon has made a distinct contribution to the progress of the denomination. As a supplement to his valuable work, provision should be made for the publication annually of a comprehensive year book and directory after the pattern of the Year Book of the former Methodist Episcopal Church. The Roman Catholic Church makes available in its year books all the data of current significance relating to its organization. Methodism should do the same.

LEWIS O. HARTMAN

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**The American Churches: An Interpretation.** By WILLIAM WARREN SWEET. New York: The Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948. pp. 153. \$1.50.

By this historical exposition of the underlying causes of their social-mindedness, Professor William Warren Sweet has materially increased the already heavy indebtedness of the American churches to him. Within the brief compass of this volume churchmen will find enlightenment on many puzzling problems of American church history.

The seven chapters were initially prepared as lectures delivered in 1946 on the Beckly lectureship in England. In their present form they may well prove no less informative to American ministers and laymen of all denominations than they were to the members of the British Methodist Conference.

Possibly no feature of the present American religious scene is more disturbing to liberal-minded religionists than the multiplicity of denominations. Constant emphasis is placed on the weakness of religion in America growing out of its division into more than three hundred churches and sects. How often, and rightly, is the lament heard that in an hour of social and spiritual crisis there is no single voice to bring the healing word of divinely inspired religion. How discomfiting and sad the fact that instead there is heard a babel chorus of discordant sounds, each claiming to be *the* word of truth. Increasingly, from many quarters the assumption is voiced that if only unity can be brought about weakness will become power and the strength of a united church speedily utilized to cure the world's ills and to heal the people's woes.

Is there valid historical basis for this assumption? Professor Sweet says there is not. He says he would rather have five minority churches than 310 minority bodies, but that he would prefer 310 minority churches to one dominant religious body.

Religious liberty is one of the proudest of our American traditions. Denominational diversity is "one of the prices we pay in America for the complete freedom of religious expression. . . ." "Human nature," says Dr. Sweet, "is such that when an organization can dominate and control, it generally controls even though theoretically it is opposed to such control." For illustration, when Congregationalism, established by law in New England, enjoyed special privileges under law, it was only after minority religious groups attained a voting majority that full religious liberty was secured. An even more significant fact: during a period of centuries, whenever and wherever the Roman Catholic Church has possessed power to control, it has strictly limited religious freedom. Its loyalty to truth, it contends, compels it to do so, since the tenets of Roman Catholicism constitute truth and Protestantism is error. To permit the propagation of error is disloyalty to God. Religious wars, of which history offers many examples, we are reminded, "have all arisen out of a majority

religion with power to restrict and restrain minorities." So far as the author knows (and his historical knowledge is far reaching) "no majority religious body has ever voluntarily surrendered its privileged position."

In this limited review, I have chosen to bring from a single chapter an example of the keen and discriminating historical insight which characterizes the book as a whole.

WADE CRAWFORD BARCLAY

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**The One Great Church.** By JOSEPH FORT NEWTON. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948. pp. x-122. \$2.00.

The versatility of Dr. Joseph Fort Newton is quite evident as one reads the fascinating story of his life as told by himself in *River of Years*, and then turns to his brief little book of essays and addresses entitled *The One Great Church* to discover the wide sweep of his mind and interest. The eight messages in the book are not definitely related, varying in theme, but they have a unity of spirit as this man of great literary artistry weaves them together in an effort to "translate the vocabulary of the church into the language of an age inhibited by a mind-set which makes it the victim of under-belief, if not of suppressed religion."

The title essay with which Dr. Newton initiates his book was prepared shortly before the launching of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam. The author is eminently qualified to interpret the idea of a World Church, since he was born in the Baptist tradition, served in a community church, preached in the famed City Temple in London during the years of the first World War, and in more recent years his ministry has been in the Episcopal Church. This wide and varied experience has given him a breadth of sympathetic understanding toward the Protestant denominations which enables him to address himself to such a theme as "The Universal Church" in convincing style.

Speaking of the common tie that binds Christians together intimately, Dr. Newton says, "The greatest marvel of our age is not radium, not radio, nor radar, nor atomic energy, but the discovery of the oneness of the Spiritual Community. The genius of the World Church will be unity in diversity, with the many branches of the Christian Church being united by a grand orthodoxy of the heart, however they may differ in name and rite and ritual word."

The essence of the message of Dr. Newton is that "our diversities are superficial; our agreements are fundamental." Tracing the unfolding power of the church from the time it was a house-to-house fellowship until it became the dominant force in the world, the author points out the disintegration and corruption of the great united church, which in the end began to crumble and weaken itself. Then came the mighty Reformation out of which came the "little active and alive churches" which tended to give new birth and impetus to the Christian idea and spirit. The outbreak of war in 1914 saw "the land of Luther, the land of Wesley, and the land of Joan of Arc grappling at each other's throats in an ecumenical disaster, after which Christian strategy changed; an ecumenical movement was formed to meet an ecumenical calamity." Since the end of World War I the churches have been seeking a unity in spite of diversity, and they have been drawn together, "jammed together by the need of the world and the hunger of the Christian mind and soul."

Dr. Newton presents an interesting and helpful picture of the development of

the movements which have eventuated in the recent formation of the World Council of Churches. Declaring "that secularism is bankrupt, sectarianism is sacrilege, science is suspect . . . only the vital mind, the spiritual vision, the magnanimous heart, the merciful and skillful hand can take our whirling world and shape it after a new pattern . . . and our labor is not in vain in the Lord." Surveying the world scene, the author interprets the need and the answer in Christ and ends with "my faith shining and unshaken."

In the other essays Dr. Newton deals with such great themes as Fate, Faith and God, Religion and Health, and the Marriage Muddle. He is as skillful and as much at home in one sphere as another, and moves from one to another with a beauty of style and charm which is intriguing. In the words of another commentator in his review of Dr. Newton's little book, "There is probably no one in the American pulpit today who surpasses him as a writer of English prose," and to that commendation I am privileged to add my hearty Amen.

JOHN BRANSCOMB

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**Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters. Volume 2.** By C. B. Sissons.

Toronto: Clarke Irwin. pp. x-678. \$7.50.

In 1850 Lord Elgin (then Governor-general of Canada) wrote to Lord Grey (the Colonial Secretary in the British Government) about a man to whom he had just given a letter of introduction. "By this mail," he said, "one of the ablest men in Canada goes to England, the Revd. Dr. Ryerson, Superintendent General of Education in Upper Canada. . . . I believe that he knows as much of Canada as any man" (p. 196). This is the subject of the present biography. Not every able and well-informed person deserves to have his story told at length; Ryerson unquestionably did. He was a forceful character who played an important role in the history of his generation. The times were exceptional, and Ryerson touched contemporary life at many points. He was a Methodist minister who found himself, from the early years of his career, deeply involved in public affairs. Great issues were being settled; the whole character of subsequent Canadian life was being shaped. One after another Ryerson became involved in the controversies of his day. The type of government that was to prevail, the measure of popular responsibility that could be achieved, the ties that were to bind Canada to the outside world, the claim of certain groups to special privileges, the nature of the educational institutions that were to serve the country—to each of these questions Ryerson made a decisive contribution. And these were not abstract issues. They concerned the life of the people, and they were debated by men of character and ability. One by one all the leading figures of a generation rich in striking figures cross the stage. Strachan, Mackenzie, Baldwin, Elgin, Macdonald, Brown, Mowat, Blake—all the men who were deciding the destiny of Canada appear in these pages.

Among them Ryerson takes his place. Important features of his career do not belong to this volume. Professor Sissons has previously described the saddlebag days as a Methodist circuit rider, Ryerson's distinguished editorship of *The Christian Guardian*, his activities in founding and then directing the affairs of Victoria College. We see clearly, however, that when Ryerson became an important public figure he did not cease to regard himself as primarily a Methodist minister. "On my own vocation as a minister of [the Wesleyan Conference]," he wrote, "I have placed a much higher estimate than on any situation in the gift of any past, present, or future government of Canada" (p. 169). So we are never out of sight of the growth and

development of The Methodist Church; but Ryerson's chief work was in the sphere of education. He founded the common school system of Ontario, and for thirty years administered and perfected it. "I have laid it down as a first principle," he wrote, "that the proper and right thing to do is to educate the people through the people themselves, by their own voluntary co-operation and exertion. . . ." (p. 249). We watch Ryerson patiently training his fellow citizens, and laboriously working to help them help themselves. There were adversaries, of course, and Ryerson was not the man to shrink from controversy. Actually he must have enjoyed a fight or he wouldn't have become involved as often as he did. All the while, however, the main task was patiently pushed forward, and a contemporary well qualified to speak (the Principal of Queen's) declared that "Dr. Ryerson has raised an imperishable monument to himself in the Common School System of Canada" (p. 424).

When the first volume of this work appeared ten years ago, it was immediately apparent that Professor Sissons was making a contribution of the greatest importance to the history of Canada. It can now safely be said that his *Egerton Ryerson* has few peers and no superiors among Canadian biographies. The reader sometimes feels that Professor Sissons, who has wisely chosen to let Ryerson and his contemporaries tell their own story, might with profit have omitted or at least curtailed some of the letters. It is difficult, also, to avoid the feeling that there must have been another side to Ryerson. Trollope assures us that Archdeacon Grantly was a much less formidable man when alone with his wife than when he faced the world. It must have been so with Ryerson, but what he was like with his friends and his family we are hardly given the material to judge. But these are small defects in a monumental work. All who are interested in the development of religion and education in North America must be profoundly grateful to Professor Sissons.

GERALD CRAGG

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**The Pure Celestial Fire.** By RANDOLPH CARLETON CHALMERS. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1948. pp. xi-238. \$3.50.

The author is a Canadian ordained to the ministry of the United Church in 1934, with experience as seminary lecturer, as minister of two pastorates, and now is associate secretary of the Board of Evangelism and Social Service.

According to the foreword, the whole purpose of the book is to proclaim the truth that Christianity is evangelical. With lay leaders in mind, technical terms are avoided, but the book deals with so much theology and church history that its greatest value will be to preachers. The fourteen chapters abound in quotations and references, so that while the author claims his work to be only a summary of the truth of Evangelical Christianity, he covers nineteen centuries of Christian witness.

The book is timely. Its definition of terms and clear statement of the basic Christian emphases will be helpful today when Christianity is challenged by materialistic and pagan ideologies. The title is taken from a verse by Charles Wesley:

"Thou who camest from above,  
The pure celestial fire to impart  
Kindle a flame of sacred love  
On the mean altar of my heart."

The first chapter defines Evangelicalism and lists its characteristics, namely, religious freedom, immediate communion with God, a Christ-centered faith, the

Bible as the rule of faith and life, the originating and sustaining power of the Holy Spirit, a passion for souls, and a faith that relies on the sovereign grace of God in Christ.

From wide reading and careful research the author traces the meaning and the history of Evangelicalism, and this study alone should do much to clarify the thinking of those who desire church union. It shows the basis upon which it could succeed. The more evangelical we become the more united we are in fact. Therefore, the author asks, "if church unity is not progressing rapidly enough today, may it not be due to a lack of true Evangelicalism?" The reader of this book will be inclined to agree.

Here is a timely volume, filled with distilled truth from many sources, with a message for these times. It will be of great help to the student and the preacher.

PETER MARSHALL

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**The Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 1, No. 1, June, 1948.** Editors, REV. T. F. TORRANCE and REV. J. K. S. REID. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, Ltd. pp. 111. 3/6 per copy (3/10½ post free); annual subscription 14s. (15s. 6d. post free.)

This is the first issue of a new quarterly, "born of the conviction that theology is a task urgent upon the whole church." In the opening editorial, theology is seen not as a specialized discipline remote from life but as an outgrowth of Christ's life in the church: "theology becomes the unfolding of the truth in its thought and life" and "that strenuous act of understanding and obedience which constitutes the church's service of God." The editors are not afraid of the word "dogma"; but they call for "fruitful debate" as the means of arriving at the clarification of dogma. They plan to carry articles of three types—dogmatic theology, biblical theology, and applied theology. The contributors in this first issue are ministers, professors, and one bishop; reviewers include Dr. John Baillie. Sample titles are "The Office of Christ in Predestination," "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament," "The Problem of Communication."

E. H. L.

**The Martin Luther Christmas Book.** With celebrated woodcuts by his contemporaries. Translated and arranged by ROLAND H. BAINTON. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1948. pp. 76. \$2.50.

Dr. Bainton of Yale has given us a charming Christmas "gift book," beautifully illustrated by reproductions from Dürer and other artists contemporary with Luther whom he and his first publishers seem strangely to have ignored. But more than that, this selection and arrangement of Luther's treatments of the Christmas story in his sermons on the Gospels makes a powerful impression of the strength and joy of a robust faith won through close grappling with doubt. We see, too, the direct, homely humanness and the depth of feeling in Luther's approach to the characters and events of the biblical narrative. We have reprinted a sample of this vigorous message on the opening page of the present issue of RELIGION IN LIFE.

E. H. L.

**Reinhold Niebuhr: Prophet from America.** By D. R. Davies. Macmillan. \$2.00. "Just as Bryce wrote the best book on America, so another Englishman has written most acutely on this great American theologian."

**Selected Mystical Writings of William Law.** Ed. by Stephen Hobhouse. Harper. \$4.50. "With notes and twenty-four studies in the mystical theology of William Law and Jacob Boehme and an Enquiry into the Influence of Jacob Boehme on Isaac Newton." Foreword by Aldous Huxley.

**Is God Evident?** By Gerald Heard. Harper. \$3.00. "An essay toward a natural theology." The author presents with his usual cogency the thesis that "the new data in physics, biology, and psychology is building up a new large picture of meaning."

**The Communication of Ideas.** Ed. by Lyman Bryson. Harper. \$3.50. One of the series of symposia published by the Institute for Religious and Social Studies. Approaches to the problem from the standpoints of psychology, anthropology, the arts, the press, radio, etc.

**Unknown Germany.** By Hanna Hafkesbrink. Yale University Press. \$2.50. An inner chronicle of the First World War based on letters and diaries mostly of soldiers. "It is my hope that this book may contribute to a more thoughtful consideration of the complex German problem."

**Falsifiers of History.** Committee for Promotion of Peace, New York. 25¢. In lots of 100 or more, 15¢. The Soviet Information Bureau's reply to documents on Nazi-Soviet relations published by our State Department, January, 1948. Evidence that Western powers, prior to 1939, tried to isolate the Soviet Union and turn Nazi Germany against her. Introduction by Frederick L. Schuman.

**Toward a More Efficient Church.** By William H. Leach. Revell. \$1.50. "This book has been written as a guide, brief but fairly inclusive, to all those churches which really have the courage to test their organizations."

**A Pastoral Triumph.** By Charles F. Kemp. Macmillan. \$2.25. The life and work of Richard Baxter at Kidderminster in seventeenth-century England—a truly great pastor.

**Pastoral Counseling in Family Relationships.** By Leland Foster Wood. Federal Council of Churches, New York. 60¢, paper. A useful manual for ministers and church workers, with a bibliography of more extensive books on counseling.

**The Gospel and the Sermon on the Mount.** By Arnold T. Ohrn. Revell. \$1.50. A Norwegian preacher and teacher, now General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance at Washington, D. C., "believes the Sermon on the Mount combines with and emphasizes both the gospel and its ethics . . . grace and Christian duty, each being harmonized with the other."

**The Bible: The Book of God and of Man.** By James A. Montgomery. Ventnor Publishers, Ventnor, N. J. \$2.75. A study of biblical history and characters for such lay readers as are accustomed to a stress on "divine" rather than "human" factors in the Bible, by a professor emeritus of the University of Pennsylvania.

**Letters to Young Churches.** By J. B. Phillips. Macmillan. \$2.50. A refreshing translation of the New Testament Epistles by an English vicar, with introduction by C. S. Lewis.

**Religion and Adolescent Character.** By W. H. Backhouse. Lutterworth Press, London. 10s.6d. Theory and practice of religious education, and

suggestions for a syllabus of religious instruction for British secondary schools.

**Think on These Things.** By Constance Garrett. Abingdon-Cokesbury. \$1.00. Thirty-two spiritual meditations emphasizing the personal relationship between God and man; with suggestions for further study and practical application.

**Bishop Brent.** By Alexander C. Zabriskie. Westminster. \$3.75. A biography of a genial crusader for Christian unity who was known as "Everybody's Bishop," by another active worker in the ecumenical movement.

**Is God In There?** By Charles Tudor Leber. Revell. \$2.50. This book answers "yes" to the child's question; *God is* in the church. "A constant stream of humanity pours into the witness box of God through these pages; they are not dead saints but living men and women."

**Organized Religion in the United States.** Ed. by Ray H. Abrams. March, 1948, issue of *The Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Philadelphia. Single copy for nonmembers, \$2.00. A symposium comprising contemporary religious institutions, their relationship to state, class, family; social action, future prospects, etc.

**Jesus, Jews and Gentiles.** By Benjamin Dannel. Arco Publishing Company, New York. \$3.00. An exposé of the use of the New Testament by "Christian" educators to justify hatred of the Jews as "Christ-killers" and rejecters of the gospel. (Quotations from church textbooks are predominantly from one branch of the church.) Unfortunately the considerable truth in this book is interlarded with special pleading and it lacks background in biblical scholarship.

**The Case of the Nazarene Reopened.** By Hyman E. Goldin. Expo-

sition Press, New York. \$5.00. This book shares with the preceding an over-emphasis on the "Christ-killer" accusation as a primary cause of anti-Semitism today—but has more substance, if less readability. It is the book of a lawyer with extensive rabbinical background.

**It Costs Us Nothing.** By W. T. Couch. Henry Regnery, Hinsdale, Ill. 25¢. A pamphlet by the Director of the University of Chicago Press, challenging the ethics of certain commitments by American book publishers to "imperialist" methods of distributing books abroad.

**Education for Life.** By John O. Gross. Abingdon-Cokesbury. \$2.25. A leader in the field of higher education writes with "the hope that it will arouse all who seek to influence the opinions of others to discover anew the responsibilities of their efforts. Now, once again, the church faces a plastic, fluid world situation which can be set in favor of Christian idealism."

**On Our Own Doorstep.** By Frank S. Mead. Friendship Press. \$1.50. Introduction to the history, problems of the hour, and missionary activities in Alaska, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, the Canal Zone, the Virgin Islands.

**Epistle to White Christians.** By Fred D. Wentzel. Christian Education Press, Philadelphia. \$1.50. Proposing a simple, fundamental remedy for the "race problem," to "begin now to be brotherly in the house of God." This would bring new power to the church, which is now "a very sick man telling everybody how to be well."

**Pathways of Peace.** By Leslie Eisan. Brethren Publishing House, Elgin, Ill. \$2.50. An interesting history of the Brethren Civilian Public Service program, throwing light on various ethical and practical problems of conscientious objection in wartime.